Ludwig van Beethoven
(b Bonn, bap. 17 Dec 1770; d Vienna, 26 March 1827)

German composer. His early achievements, as composer and performer, show him to be extending the Viennese Classical tradition that he had inherited from Mozart and Haydn. As personal affliction -- deafness, and the inability to enter into happy personal relationships -- loomed larger, he began to compose in an increasingly individual musical style, and at the end of his life he wrote his most sublime and profound works. From his success at combining tradition and exploration and personal expression, he came to be regarded as the dominant musical figure of the 19th century, and scarcely any significant composer since his time has escaped his influence or failed to acknowledge it. For the respect his works have commanded of musicians, and the popularity they have enjoyed among wider audiences, he is probably the most admired composer in the history of Western music.
usic of the Bonn period.

1. Family background and childhood.

Three generations of the Beethoven family found employment as musicians at the court of the Electorate of Cologne, which had its seat at Bonn. The composer's grandfather, Ludwig (Louis) van Beethoven (1712–73), the son of an enterprising burgher of Mechelen (Belgium), was a trained musician with a fine bass voice, and after positions at Mechelen, Leuven and Liège accepted in 1733 an appointment as bass in the electoral chapel at Bonn. In 1761 he was appointed Kapellmeister, a position which – although he seems not to have been a composer, unlike other occupants of such a post – carried with it the responsibility of supervising the musical establishment of the court.

With his wife Maria Josepha Poll, whom he had married in 1733, and who later took to drink, he had only one child that survived. Johann van Beethoven (c1740–1792) was a lesser man than his father. He, too, entered the elector's service, first as a boy soprano in 1752, and continuing after adolescence as a tenor. He was also proficient enough on the piano and the violin to be able to supplement his income by giving lessons on those instruments as well as in singing. In November 1767 he married Maria Magdalena (1745–87), daughter of Heinrich Keverich, 'overseer of cooking' at the electoral summer palace of Ehrenbreitstein, and already the widow of Johann Leym, valet to the Elector of Trier; she was not yet 21. The couple took lodgings in Bonn at 515 Bonngasse. Their first child Ludwig Maria (bap. 2 April 1769) lived only six days; their second, also called Ludwig and the subject of this narrative, was baptized on 17 December 1770. Of five children subsequently born to the couple only two survived infancy: Caspar Anton Carl (bap. 8 April 1774) and Nikolaus Johann (bap. 2 October 1776). Both brothers were to play important parts in Beethoven's life.

Inevitably the early years of the son of an obscure musician in a small provincial town are themselves sunk in obscurity, and though speculation and myth-making have both been productive, facts are rather scarce. It is clear that at a very early age he received instruction from his father on the piano and the violin. Tradition adds that the child, made to stand at the keyboard, was often in tears. Beethoven's first appearance in public was at a concert given with another of his father's pupils (a contralto) on 26 March 1778, at which (according to the advertisement) he played 'various clavier concertos and trios'. A little later, when he was eight, his father is said to have sent him to the old court organist van den Eeden, from whom he may have received some grounding in music theory as well as keyboard instruction. He appears also to have had piano lessons from Tobias Friedrich Pfeiffer, who lodged for a while with the family, and informal tuition from several local or ganists. A relative, Franz Rovantini, gave the boy lessons on the violin and viola. His general education was not continued beyond the elementary school, but this was in accordance with the usual custom in Bonn at that time, only a few children going on to a Gymnasium (high school). The comparative brevity of Beethoven's formal education, combined with the fact that most of his out-of-school hours must have been devoted to music, explains some of the gaps in his academic equipment, such as his blindness to orthography and punctuation and his inability to carry out the simplest multiplication sum.

In 1779 a musician arrived in Bonn who was to be Beethoven's first important teacher. This was Christian Gottlob Neefe, who came as the musical director of a theatrical company that the elector took into his establishment. The point at which he began instructing Beethoven is not known. But in February 1781 Neefe succeeded to the post of court organist, a position that evidently required an assistant, and by June 1782, when Neefe left Bonn for a short period, Beethoven was acting as deputy in his absence; he was then 11½. Neefe's estimate of his pupil is contained in a communication to Cramer's Magazin der Musik dated 2 March 1783 – the first printed notice of Beethoven:

Louis van Beethoven, son of the tenor singer already mentioned, a boy of 11 years and of most promising talent. He plays the piano very skilfully and with power, reads at sight very well, and I need say no more than that the chief piece he plays is Das wohltemperirte Clavier of Sebastian Bach, which Herr Neefe put into his hands … So far as his other duties permitted, Herr Neefe has also given him instruction in thoroughbass. He is now training him in composition and for his encouragement has had nine variations for the piano, written by him on a march [by Ernst Christoph Dressler], engraved at Mannheim. This youthful genius is deserving of help to enable him to travel. He would surely become a second Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart if he were to continue as he has begun.

The reference to Mozart was presumably to the child prodigy and not to the mature composer whose years of fame in Vienna were yet to come; but Neefe's affection for his young pupil and confidence in his ability are plain. The variations on Dressler's march (woo63), published by Götz of Mannheim, were Beethoven's first published work.

Further experience came to Beethoven via Neefe in 1783 when his teacher, overburdened with the work of the temporarily absent Kapellmeister Lucchesi, employed him as 'cembalist in the orchestra', not only a position of some responsibility but also one that will have enabled him to hear all the popular operas of the day. The autumn saw the publication of his first significant composition, the three piano sonatas dedicated to the Elector Maximilian Friedrich (woo47). Towards the close of the year Beethoven undertook a trip to Holland, where he is reported to have performed on numerous occasions, notably including an orchestral concert at The Hague (at which he probably played his Concerto in E flat, woo4).

2. Youth.

Although Beethoven by now enjoyed a sturdy reputation as a virtuoso in the regions surrounding Bonn, he still drew no salary from the court for his duties as Neefe's assistant. His petition (in February 1 784) for an official position as assistant to the court organist was granted, but the elector died before his salary, if any, could be fixed. But the new elector, Maximilian Franz, brother of the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, instituted economies on his accession in 1784 that transferred some of Neefe's salary to his pupil. Beethoven's salary as organist was thus fixed at 150 florins. Increased attention to his activities as a performer may have been a factor in his diminished output as a composer in the years from 1785 to 1789. Apart from a set of three piano quartets from 1785 (woo36), possibly intended for dedication to the new elector but not published until after Beethoven's death, there exists little evidence of compositional activity during these years. About this time, too, he seems to have had violin lessons from Franz Ries, a good friend of the family, and to have begun giving piano lessons himself.

Neefe, as quoted above, had declared that the young genius should be given the chance to travel, and in the spring of 1787 Beethoven visited Vienna. In the absence of documents much remains uncertain about the precise aims of the journey and the extent to which they were realized; but there seems little doubt that he met Mozart and perhaps had a few lessons from him. It seems equally clear that he did not remain in Vienna for longer than about two weeks. The news of his mother's deteriorating health precipitated his sudden journey back. He returned to Bonn to find his mother dying of tuberculosis, and his first surviving letter, to a member of a family in Augsburg that had befriended him on his way, describes the melancholy events of that summer and hints at his own ill-health, depression and lack of financial resources.

For the fortunes of the Beethoven family were in decline. This was not always the case. It is now known that Beethoven did not spend his early childhood in great poverty, as most biographers have assumed. Johann van Beethoven managed to support his family in reasonably moderate circumstances until the mid-1780s, when a series of misadventures severely reduced his capacity as breadwinner.

This is perhaps the place for a word or two about Beethoven's parents. The personality of the mother whom he now mourned (she had died on 17 July 1787) does not emerge in very distinctive terms; the accounts speak in conventional phrases of her piety, gentleness and kindness, and of her gravity of manner. This is contrasted, again somewhat conventionally, with Johann van Beethoven's harsher and perhaps even violent temperament. In these years the talents on which he relied to support his family, at no time outstanding, seem to have been observed to decline. An official report of 1784 described his voice as 'very stale', and for some time before his wife's death he had begun to drink heavily, as his mother had done. In 1789, therefore, Beethoven – who was not yet 19 – took the extraordinary step of placing himself at the head of the family by petitioning for half his father's salary to enable him to support his brothers; this was granted, and the old tenor's services were dispensed with. The psychological significance of this act of self-assertion has not escaped his biographers.

The next four years, the last that Beethoven spent in Bonn, can be portrayed in a sunnier light. From 1789, when the musical life of the town under the new elector was fully resumed, Beethoven played the viola in the orchestras both of the court chapel and of the theatre, alongside such fine musicians as Franz Ries and Andreas Romberg (violins), Bernhard Romberg (cello), Nikolaus Simrock (horn) and Antoine Reicha (flute); some of these were to remain almost lifelong friends. He also began to be active again as a composer, producing, among other works, the most impressive composition of the Bonn years, the cantata on the death of the Emperor Joseph II (woo87).

Joseph II was not merely the elector's elder brother but a powerful symbol of those intellectual, social and political ideas of the 18th century known as the Enlightenment (Aufklärung). His reformist ideas found a ready welcome in Bonn among Beethoven's contemporaries and immediate superiors in age, so that the grief caused by the emperor's death in Vienna on 20 February 1790 was no doubt more than merely formal. On hearing the news four days later the literary society (Lesegesellschaft) of Bonn at once planned a memorial celebration for 19 March. Beethoven was commissioned to produce a cantata, but for unknown reasons the work was not performed. It may be that there was insufficient time to rehearse it; that it was found unimpressive seems unlikely, since in the autumn a second cantata 'On the Accession of Leopold II to the Imperial Dignity' (woo88) was commissioned and completed – though that too seems not to have reached performance.

One further commission was undertaken to please Beethoven's talented and powerful friend Count Ferdinand Waldstein: on 6 March 1791 the count produced a ballet in old German costume, performed by the local nobility, and the music for this Ritterballett (woo1) was by Beethoven, though his name was not made public. The dedication to the Countess von Hatzfeld of 24 variations for piano on the theme of Righini's arietta 'Venni amore' (woo65), published in the summer of 1791, indicates another aristocratic connection.

But for Beethoven the chief excitements of this year may have been outside Bonn itself. As Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, the elector had to preside for many weeks over its sessions at Mergentheim, and he saw to it that he had his orchestra with him. The players' journey up the Rhine was accompanied by much revelry and clowning; in later years Beethoven retained many happy memories of this, as well as one curious memento (a mock diploma). An ambitious series of concerts was given at Mergentheim, and Beethoven also seized the opportunity of going with friends to Aschaffenburg, a summer palace of the Electors of Mainz, to visit the famous pianist Sterkel. It is said that Sterkel's light touch and graceful, fastidious style were a revelation to Beethoven. But when Sterkel challenged him to play his own Righini variations, doubting his ability to do so, it was Beethoven's turn to cause amazement, particularly since he improvised extra variations in a style that imitated Sterkel's.

By this time, it is clear, it was not only other professional musicians who recognized his worth or valued his friendship. He had formed a considerable circle of friends, drawn from some of the most discerning, progressive and respected families in Bonn. A few at least deserve mention here. Count Waldstein, eight years older than Beethoven, had come to Bonn from Vienna in 1788. A close associate of the elector and highly musical himself, he proved a devoted friend and patron of Beethoven, whom he came to know in the cultivated circle of the von Breuning family. Frau von Breuning, whose husband had died in a fire in 1777, had four children, all slightly younger than Beethoven: Eleonore, later to marry another friend of Beethoven's Bonn and early Vienna years, Franz Gerhard Wegeler; Christoph; Stephan, a lifelong friend; and Lorenz, who died young. The young widow herself became something of a second mother to Beethoven and seems to have had a keen insight into his character. She used her authority to dissuade him from neglecting duties that he found tedious, while evidently recognizing his tendency to self-absorption, since she would often remark: 'He has his raptus again'. She exercised some control, too, over his friendships; of the less suitable ones he remarked in later years: 'She understood how to keep insects off the flowers'. This kindly supervision, and the provision of what became almost a second home, meant much to Beethoven, who in spite of his many admirers remained in some ways a solitary youth, and on occasion a painfully shy one.

There were other opportunities for agreeable social life in Bonn. The elector was often absent, leaving Beethoven free for musical activities unconnected with the court. He spent much of his time in a circle of aristocratic friends and prosperous citizens such as the Westerholts, the Eichhoffs and the Kochs. The Kochs ran a kind of social and political club, the Zehrgarten, that was a centre for intellectual life in Bonn, and a number of Beethoven's early compositions were written for members of this circle.

It may have been Waldstein whose voice was decisive in the proposal that Beethoven should now go to Vienna to study with Haydn. When Haydn had passed through Bonn on his way to England in December 1790 he had met some of 'the most capable musicians', but it is not known whether Beethoven was among them. (Neefe,

Beethoven's enthusiastic mentor, must surely have been.) But in July 1792, according to Wegeler, the electoral orchestra assembled at Godesberg to give a breakfast for Haydn, now on his journey back to Vienna, and Wegeler adds that on this occasion Beethoven showed him a cantata (doubtless woo87 or 88) and received Haydn's commendation. More probably that had happened earlier, on Haydn's outward journey. But it was now that the matter of Beethoven becoming Haydn's pupil was no doubt raised; the elector, to whom it fell to pay for the journey and the living expenses in Vienna, in due course sanctioned the arrangement. Beethoven's departure was fixed for the beginning of November. An album amicorum from this time records the good wishes of a large number of his friends, who had no reason to expect that he would be leaving Bonn for ever. None of the entries was more prophetic than that of Waldstein:

Dear Beethoven: You are going to Vienna in fulfilment of your long-frustrated wishes. The Genius of Mozart is still mourning and weeping over the death of her pupil. She found a refuge but no occupation with the inexhaustible Haydn; through him she wishes once more to form a union with another. With the help of assiduous labour you shall receive Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands. Your true friend, Waldstein.

3. 1792–5.

Beethoven arrived in Vienna, the city that was to be his home for the rest of his life, in the second week of November 1792. He was not quite 22. His entry into Viennese circles was unobtrusive, and the sporadic entries in the little diary that he had started on his journey and kept at least until 1794 are the best guide to his immediate preoccupations. They show him looking for a piano and for a wig-maker, buying clothes, noting the address of a dancing-master, and the like. Later entries are concerned with the renting of some lodgings. And on the same page that records 'on Wednesday, 12 December [1792], I have 15 ducats', there is a variety of small sums of money set against the name of 'Haidn'. Within weeks of his arrival, therefore, the instruction from Haydn which had been the purpose of his journey had already begun. Of another event of the same month, the death of his father in Bonn on 18 December, there is no mention in the diary.

Haydn's tuition lasted for no longer than about a year; in January 1794 he left Vienna for his second London visit. The arrangement proved a disappointment to Beethoven, but he concealed this at the time from Haydn, and throughout 1793 the relations between pupil and teacher were outwardly cordial. Haydn appears to have had no corresponding misgivings – at any rate until later, when Beethoven had some very harsh things to say about him. Temperamentally, however, they were set for conflict. The childless Haydn no doubt wished for affection and even love from his most brilliant pupil – but that was the one thing that Beethoven was too mistrustful to give. Though he could write to the only moderately gifted (and no longer present) Neefe, 'If ever I become a great man, yours will be some of the credit', he was almost bound to feel the genius of 'Papa' Haydn standing in his way, one more father to be defied or circumvented. Beethoven's unease crystallized into the groundless suspicion that his teacher 'was not well minded towards him' and was neglecting or perhaps even sabotaging his tuition. (The formal side of the instruction can be seen from the surviving exercises, which consist of strict species counterpoint; they are in Beethoven's handwriting, with somewhat intermittent corrections by Haydn.) The lack of thoroughness on Haydn's part formed one of Beethoven's grievances. According to the composer Johann Schenk (whose testimony has, however, been contested), Beethoven secretly enlisted Schenk's help with these exercises.

It is not clear whether Haydn also instructed him in free composition. A clue here is provided by an episode that seems to reflect better on Haydn than on his pupil. Since leaving Bonn Beethoven had found himself with insufficient money for his living expenses. He continued, it is true, to receive his Bonn salary each quarter, and after his father's death he had successfully petitioned the elector to double it; but some part of t his must have gone to support his brothers, who were still in Bonn. For his subsistence in Vienna he had only 100 ducats (nearly 500 florins) per annum. He had hoped to receive the whole of it on his arrival in Vienna, at which time he had to make considerable outlays, but it seems to have been paid quarterly. The result was that he had to borrow. On 23 November 1793 Haydn wrote on his behalf to the elector, enclosing five pieces of music, 'compositions of my dear pupil Beethoven', whom he predicted would 'in time fill the position of one of Europe's greatest composers'. He added (with characteristic generosity): 'I shall be proud to call myself his teacher; I only wish that he might remain with me a little while longer'. Haydn's letter next turned to the question of Beethoven's subsidy; it described the elector's 100 ducats as a sum quite inadequate to Beethoven's needs, pointed out that he himself had had to lend him 500 florins, and ended by suggesting that the elector might do well to increase the subsidy to 1000 florins in the coming year. The elector's reply was both accurate and icy. Four of the five submitted works had been composed and performed in Bonn long before the move to Vienna, and were therefore no evidence of progress. Moreover Beethoven was being paid not only the 100

ducats but also his ordinary salary of 400 florins, so had no reason to be in particular difficulty. The elector concluded:

I am wondering if he would not do better to begin his return journey, in order to resume his duties here; for I very much doubt whether he will have made any important progress in composition and taste during his present stay, and I fear he will only bring back debts from his journey, just as he did from his first trip to Vienna.

It looks as though Beethoven had misled Haydn in respect of his total income, and thus exposed Haydn to the elector's withering reply. He may also have misled Haydn as to the dates of the works the latter submitted to the elector, although it is hard to know whether Haydn actually thought that they were new works or knowingly submitted them as newly revised works. In any event, this suggests that Beethoven completed hardly anything new under Haydn's immediate supervision, though he seems to have revised and polished several of the later Bonn works.

When Haydn left for England in 1794, he passed Beethoven on to another tutor, Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, the Kapellmeister at the Stephansdom and the best-known teacher of counterpoint in Vienna. The lessons, three times a week, started after Haydn's departure and continued throughout 1794 to the spring of 1795. They were more thorough-going than Haydn's had been, and covered not only simple counterpoint but contrapuntal exercises in free writing, in imitation, in two-, three- and four-part fugue, choral fugue, double counterpoint at the different intervals, double fugue, triple counterpoint and canon – at which point they were broken off. Albrechtsberger proved a most conscientious, though at the same time very dry, teacher.

A third name is often linked with Haydn's and Albrechtsberger's: that of the imperial Kapellmeister Antonio Salieri. It was Salieri's genial custom to offer free tuition to impecunious musicians, especially in the setting of Italian words to music; and it is usually stated that Beethoven availed himself of this informal help soon after his arrival in Vienna. The only surviving evidence of any serious study with Salieri, however, dates from the years 1801–2, when he set a large number of unaccompanied partsongs with Italian words and a scena and aria for soprano and string orchestra (woo92a). These were followed in 1802 by two final pieces scored for orchestra, the terzetto Tremate, empi, tremate (op.116) and the duet Ne' giorni tuoi felici (woo93). They are more than exercises and may have been intended for a concert. In spite of Salieri's help Beethoven never fully mastered Italian prosody, though something had no doubt been gained in the skill of setting words by the time that he turned in the direction of opera.

But that is to jump far ahead. Aside from his studies, Beethoven's first task in Vienna was to establish himself as a pianist and composer. This was something that he achieved both rapidly and with remarkable success. His gifts apart, there were at least two reasons for this, and they not only helped to launch him but continued to sustain him after he had gained an ascendant position. The first was his immediate contacts with aristocratic circles. He had arrived from Bonn as the court organist and pianist to the Emperor Franz's uncle, and with a reputation already spread by high-born Viennese who had heard him while visiting the elector; he was a protégé of Count Waldstein, who was connected by birth or by marriage with several of the greatest houses of the Austrian, Bohemian and Hungarian nobility; and he was the pupil of Haydn. Thus he was in the strongest possible position to be introduced into the best aristocratic circles.

The second reason had to do with the character of the circles themselves. The aristocracy based on the Austrian capital surpassed all others of Europe in its devotion to music, and much of its time and a considerable part of its fortunes – a ruinous amount in some cases – was spent in the conspicuous indulgence of this taste. Not only did these aristocrats welcome virtuosos to their town palaces and country estates, but some of them, such as Prince Lobkowitz, kept private orchestras and even – like the Esterházys – opera companies as well. If their support was not on quite so lavish a scale, at least they employed a wind band or, like Prince Karl Lichnowsky and the Russian Count Rasumovsky, a quartet of string players. The Court Councillor von Kees was among the many who organized private concerts; a large library of music was assembled by the Baron van Swieten, a patriarch whose distinction it was to cultivate the music of Bach and Handel and introduce it to Viennese audiences. The names of van Swieten and some of these others are found in the records of Mozart's and Haydn's lives; and they now gave a welcome to Beethoven.

He certainly needed more than their mere approval. His salary from Bonn was paid only until March 1794, and in a list of the elector's musicians from the autumn of the year he was entered as 'Beethoven, without salary in Vienna, until recalled'. (The elector now had his own difficulties as a result of the military victories of the neighbouring French. He had visited Vienna in January 1794, and Beethoven may have called on him and discussed his position.) Since many of the aristocracy had spacious accommodation or several houses, it was

natural for them to provide Beethoven with lodging. One of the first houses in Vienna (if not the very first) in which he had rooms was owned by Prince Lichnowsky, who soon established himself as a leading patron of the composer. Both he and his wife Princess Christiane (née Thun) were intensely musical, and lavished a steady stream of kindnesses on him. But others were scarcely less generous or hospitable, so that it is no surprise to find Beethoven setting off in June 1793 for Eisenstadt, where Haydn was staying; doubtless the Esterházys looked after him. Another early supporter who became a lifelong friend was the Hungarian Nikolaus Zmeskall von Domanovecz. A capable amateur cellist and composer of quartets, he ardently promoted performances of Beethoven's music and continually rendered him small services, including the provision of quill pens, which Beethoven could never cut properly himself.

Beethoven's instant and striking successes as a virtuoso were at first confined to performances in private houses. Regular public concerts of the sort given throughout the season in London and Paris were not then a feature of Viennese musical life; there were only a few annual charity concerts and an occasional subscription concert of a virtuoso or Kapellmeister. But in the salons the stunning effect of Beethoven's solo playing, and particularly perhaps of his improvising, was immediately recognized. A glimpse of what this aspect of his life was like to Beethoven is to be found in one of his letters to Eleonore von Breuning in Bonn, to whom – because of a quarrel before his departure from there – he did not write until he had been in Vienna for almost a year. He had dedicated to her the first of his works to be published in Vienna (composed in part in Bonn), his variations for violin and piano on Mozart's 'Se vuol ballare' (woo40), and in alluding to the difficult trills in the coda confessed to her:

I should never have written down this kind of piece, had I not already noticed fairly often how some people in Vienna after hearing me extemporize one evening would next day note down several peculiarities of my style and palm them off with pride as their own. Well, as I foresaw that their pieces would soon b e published, I resolved to forestall those people. But there was another reason, too; my desire to embarrass those Viennese pianists, some of whom are my sworn enemies. I wanted to revenge myself on them in this way, because I knew beforehand that my variations would here and there be put before the said gentlemen and that they would cut a sorry figure with them.

The pugnaciousness of the virtuoso is characteristic, and it was not long before he displayed his powers before wider audiences.

An early opportunity came at a charity concert in the Burgtheater on 29 March 1795. Beethoven appeared as composer as well as virtuoso, for he played a piano concerto of his own, probably the work in B flat, later published as the Second Concerto (op.19). His old friend from Bonn, Franz Gerhard Wegeler, who was in Vienna from October 1794 to the summer of 1796, witnessed the preparations for this concert – or it may have been the one nine months later in December and the concerto may have been the First (op.15) in C – and relates how Beethoven completed the finale only at the very last moment while suffering from severe abdominal pains. At a second charity concert the next day Beethoven again appeared on the platform; this time he gave an improvisation. And on 31 March he played for the third time in three days at a performance of Mozart's La clemenza di Tito organized by his widow; this time the concerto was one of Mozart's.

Apart from the variations dedicated to Eleonore von Breuning he had not yet published anything in Vienna. The decision was deliberate, for his op.1 was intended to be an event. He chose a set of three piano trios, a genre dear to aristocratic devotees of chamber music, and he dedicated it to Prince Lichnowsky. The trios had already been heard and admired, possibly in earlier versions. There is a well-known story of what purports to have been their first performance at a soirée of Lichnowsky's at which Haydn was present; although he praised them, he is said to have advised Beethoven not to publish the third of them, in C minor. If this story is true down to the details, the soirée must have taken place before Haydn's departure for England in January 1794, for when he returned to Vienna in August 1795 op.1 had just been published. But it seems more likely that he heard the trios only on his return, and expressed regret about the inclusion of the C minor one. Since the third trio ultimately proved the most successful, Beethoven suspected malice on Haydn's part; years later Haydn confirmed that he had had misgivings about its publication, adding that he had not believed it would be understood and received so well. Beethoven published his op.1 by subscription, the edition being produced by the publisher Artaria. The subscription list contained 123 names (many of them recruited by Lichnowsky), and the subscriptions amounted to 241 copies at one ducat (roughly four and a half florins) each; since Beethoven paid the publisher only a florin per copy he made a handsome profit.

According to Wegeler, Haydn's return to Vienna was marked by the performance at Lichnowsky's of another substantial composition by Beethoven: the three piano sonatas that he subsequently published in March 1796 as

his op.2 and dedicated to Haydn. It is said that Haydn had hoped Beethoven would append to his name on the title-pages of his earliest works the words 'pupil of Haydn' – a common enough custom – and that Beethoven declined to do so, privately declaring that although he had had some lessons from Haydn he had never learnt anything from him. At all events the sonatas (like the trios before them) were published without any acknowledgment of pupillage.

Outwardly, however, relations between the two did not appear to be strained. On 18 December 1795 Beethoven made his second public appearance in Vienna as a composer-virtuoso, playing a piano concerto at a concert which Haydn organized and which included three of his latest symphonies, written for London. It is probable that this was the first performance of the C major concerto. Another sign of Beethoven's growing popularity was the invitation this year to write the minuets and German dances for the November ball held in the Redoutensaal by the Pensionsgesellschaft Bildender Künstler.

4. 1796–1800.

Beethoven's sights were now set on still wider audiences. His youngest brother Nikolaus Johann had arrived from Bonn at the very end of 1795 and had found employment in an apothecary's shop; and Caspar Carl, the other brother, had been in Vienna from the middle of 1794, apparently supporting himself by giving music lessons. With his brothers thus established in Vienna, Beethoven now felt able to embark on a concert tour. In February 1796 he set out for Prague, travelling (as Mozart had done seven years earlier) with Prince Lichnowsky. Writing from Prague to his brother Johann in Vienna he announced his intentions of visiting Dresden, Leipzig and Berlin, and added: 'I am well, very well. My art is winning me friends and respect, and what more do I want? And this time I shall make a good deal of money'. On 11 March he gave a concert in Prague; on 29 April he played before the Elector of Saxony in Dresden. On reaching Berlin, he appeared several times before the King of Prussia (Friedrich Wilhelm II), and with the king's first cellist, Jean Louis Duport, he played the two op.5 cello sonatas, written for this performance. Another pièce d'occasion was the set of 12 variations for cello and piano on a theme of Handel; the cello was of course the king's instrument, and the choice of theme ('See the conqu'ring hero comes') may have contained a courteous nod towards the throne. The king gave Beethoven a gold snuffbox filled with louis d'ors: 'no ordinary snuffbox', Beethoven later declared with pride, 'but such a one as it might have been customary to give to an ambassador'. He seems to have stayed for about a month in Berlin, making the acquaintance of the Kapellmeister, Himmel, as well as of Zelter and Fasch, and twice giving improvisations before the Singakademie.

By the time that Beethoven returned to Vienna his friend Wegeler had gone back to Bonn, together with Christoph von Breuning, though Christoph's brother Lorenz remained in Vienna. Beethoven and Wegeler – who completed his studies in medicine, married Eleonore von Breuning in 1802, and set up practice in Koblenz – never met again, but they remained friends and exchanged letters from time to time. Wegeler's contribution to the Biographische Notizen über Ludwig van Beethoven that he compiled with Ferdinand Ries after Beethoven's death and published in 1838 (with a supplement, 1845) is a valuable source of information on Beethoven's childhood and adolescence in Bonn and on his life in Vienna up to 1796.

At the end of 1796 Beethoven again travelled. He played at a concert at Pressburg (now Bratislava) on 23 November. The next year, 1797, is almost devoid of incidents that have left any record. At the end of May he wrote to Wegeler that he was doing well – in fact, better and better; on 1 October he penned some warm lines in the album of Lorenz von Breuning, who was leaving Vienna to return to Bonn. Between those dates nothing is known, and it is even possible that he was seriously ill at that time. One source assigns such an illness to the second half of the previous year, where there is also a gap in the records (from July to November). The year 1797 saw the publication of several compositions: his opp.5–8, the most important of which were the E flat Piano Sonata (op.7) and the cello sonatas written for Berlin (op.5), as well as the song Adelaide (op.46), dedicated to the author of its words, the poet Matthisson. The publications of 1798 were even more assured, including the three op.9 string trios, his most impressive chamber works to date, and the three op.10 piano sonatas. The trios were dedicated to Count Johann Georg von Browne, a patron whom Beethoven described in the dedication as the 'first Maecenas of his Muse', while op.10 was dedicated to Browne's wife.

Early in 1798 considerable interest was aroused by the arrival in Vienna of the emissary of the French Directoire, General Bernadotte; in his retinue was the violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer. Both were only a few years older than Beethoven, whose acquaintance they made. Bernadotte's sojourn in Vienna was brief, but he is said to have suggested to Beethoven the idea of writing a 'heroic' symphony on the theme of the young General Bonaparte.

Later in the year (the exact date is unknown) Beethoven visited Prague and gave two public concerts, as well as a private recital. They were attended and described in some detail by the Bohemian composer Václav Tomášek (Wenzel Tomaschek). He heard Beethoven play the Adagio and Rondo from the Piano Sonata in A op.2 no.2, improvisations on 'Ah perdona' from Mozart's Tito and on 'Ah vous dirai-je maman', and both the B flat and C major piano concertos (Tomášek described the former as having just been written for Prague, so it was probably a revised version that was performed). For Tomášek, who by the end of his life had heard all the outstanding virtuosos from the age of Mozart to the 1840s, Beethoven remained the greatest pianist of all – though Beethoven the composer came in for more criticism. Only in 1798–9, in fact, did Beethoven's virtuosity, which seems until then to have had no serious rivals in Vienna, come under challenge from the Salzburg-born pianist Joseph Wölfl (with whom Beethoven directly engaged in a piano duel) and from Johann Baptist Cramer of London; both were about his age. The stimulus of competition from two such excellent players, whose strengths were nevertheless rather different from his own, could only have had a salutary effect on his playing, which he was to describe in 1801 (to a correspondent who had not heard him for two years) as having 'considerably improved'.

It was probably a living composer whose challenge Beethoven was finding more dispiriting. In 1795–6 he had reacted to the brilliant symphonies that Haydn had brought back from London by attempting to write a symphony of his own in C major, but although he worked at it vigorously it remained unfinished and was abandoned. Now, in April 1798, Haydn gave private performances of his new oratorio Die Schöpfung (The Creation), and Beethoven might well be excused for believing his old teacher's confession that the inspiration for some passages was more than human. Furthermore, Haydn continued to produce masterly string quartets with unabated vigour: six had been written in 1793 and six more in 1797. Although all the works with opus numbers that Beethoven had so far published in Vienna, apart from the piano sonatas, could loosely be called chamber works, the particular genre that was most closely associated with Haydn, and indeed with Mozart as well – the string quartet – was noticeably unrepresented. That Beethoven was only too aware of their formidable example there can be no doubt, and he copied out movements from several of their quartets in score for closer study. Still, the challenge was one for which he now felt himself ready, and in the second half of 1798 and through the winter and spring he worked on a set of quartets.

It is tempting to draw a connection between the selfconsciousness of this undertaking and a change in his working methods which coincided with it. Beethoven had always made sketches of the compositions that he was engaged in writing, and as time went on they became more voluminous. But hitherto they had been written on loose single leaves or bifolia of music paper. From the middle of 1798 he began to make his sketches in books of music paper. The first two of the sketchbooks contain sketches for four of the quartets that he was now writing, as well as for a considerable number of other works that he completed, revised or attempted to write in the same months. (The completed works include a song, La tiranna woo125, which he wrote to English words, working in part from a phonetic transcription.) The sketchbooks evidently retained some value for him long after they had been filled up, for he kept them by him and preserved most of them in a growing pile for the rest of his life. Some aspects of their importance, a particular preoccupation of Beethoven scholarship in recent years, are discussed below in §19.

In 1798 Karl Amenda, a student of theology and a competent violinist, arrived in Vienna from his native Courland (Latvia), and became tutor to Prince Lobkowitz's children and music teacher at the home of Mozart's widow. He and Beethoven soon became fast friends; indeed they were almost inseparable. But in the late summer of 1799 Amenda was obliged to depart again for Courland, and on 25 June 1799 Beethoven gave him a copy of a quartet 'as a small memorial of our friendship'. This quartet was later published in a somewhat altered form as the first of the op.18 quartets. It is not clear how many of the six quartets had been completed by the end of 1799; but the ones written first were in any case revised later before being sent to the publisher.

Other friendships formed around this time were ultimately more fateful for Beethoven. In May 1799 the Countesses Therese and Josephine von Brunsvik, then 24 and 20, came to Vienna from Hungary on a short visit with their widowed mother, who wished them to take lessons from Beethoven. He was charmed by them, proved a very attentive teacher, and for their album composed a 'musical offering' consisting of a song with some variations for piano duet (woo74). Through them he became friends with the other members of the family, their brother Franz and their youngest sister Charlotte; Julie (Giulietta) Guicciardi, who came to Vienna from Trieste with her parents in 1800, was their very young cousin. Beethoven was soon a welcome guest on visits to their estates in Hungary. But the short trip to Vienna had unhappy consequences for Josephine. The family made the acquaintance of Count Joseph Deym (or Herr Müller; he had been exiled after a duel and returned under a pseudonym); Deym was the proprietor of a famous museum of waxworks, and although he was almost 30 years older than Josephine, her mother pressed his claim as a suitable husband for her, partly no doubt in an attempt to

redeem the family fortunes. Josephine reluctantly assented, and they were quickly married; but Deym was in fact badly in debt, so that even financially the match had nothing to be said for it. The visits of Beethoven to the wing of the 80-room museum house in Vienna in which the Deyms lived must have afforded some consolation to the unhappy young countess.

On 2 April 1800 Beethoven gave his first concert for his own benefit, in the Burgtheater. The music included, besides a Mozart symphony and numbers from Haydn's Creation, two new works by Beethoven, the Septet (op.20) and the First Symphony. The former soon became one of his most popular works; the reception of the latter was appreciative, although the heavy scoring for the wind was remarked on. His piano playing was on display in an improvisation and a piano concerto – probably the C major. No doubt he had planned to produce a new concerto, the Third, in C minor, written around this time but not performed until the spring of 1803 (th e score, with a heavily revised solo part, is dated '1803'). Perhaps, then, the C minor concerto could not be completed in time for the concert. For his appearance later in the same month with the Bohemian horn player Johann Wenzel Stich (or 'Giovanni Punto', the name that Stich preferred to use) he very rapidly wrote a horn sonata (op.17); they gave a second concert three weeks later in Pest. Beethoven may have spent part of the summer of 1800 with the Brunsvik family in Hungary.

The second half of 1800 was outwardly uneventful; it doubtless saw the final revision of the op.18 string quartets, and the writing of the B Piano Sonata (op.22) and of the A minor and F major violin sonatas (opp.23, 24). There was less inducement to prepare new works for a possible concert in the following spring, since he had received an important commission for the court stage: he was to write the music for a ballet designed by the celebrated ballet-master Salvatore Viganò, Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus (op.43). This was given its first performance at the Burgtheater on 28 March 1801 and was successful enough to be repeated more than 20 times. Only a sketch of the scenario survives. In the finale Beethoven used a melody that evidently came to assume a certain emotional importance for him, perhaps even embodying something of his spirit of determination and heroism in battling against difficulties, for he used it again as the theme for two important and challenging sets of variations completed in 1802 and 1803: the op.35 piano variations and the variation-finale of the 'Eroica' Symphony.

By this time several publishers were competing for Beethoven's newest works, and though a number of important compositions had lately appeared – the highly individual Sonate pathétique (op.13), for instance, dedicated to Prince Lichnowsky, at the very end of 1799 – others had not yet found a buyer. An entertaining correspondence with the publisher Franz Anton Hoffmeister, who had lately moved from Vienna to Leipzig, dates from around this time. Hoffmeister finally bought several works beginning with the First Symphony, the Second Piano Concerto, the Septet and the B Piano Sonata.

It comes as a surprise to find that Beethoven was intending to dedicate the symphony to his former overlord and employer, the Elector of Cologne. The preceding years had been harsh to Maximilian Franz. After being forced by French military successes to leave Bonn in October 1794, and having stayed for a while in various cities, he had finally returned to Vienna in April 1800 and settled in Hetzendorf just outside the city. Beethoven is believed to have spent some time in summer 1801 in and around Hetzendorf, and may well have called on the elector and paid his homage or made his peace with him, for the instructions for the symphony's dedication are contained in a letter to Hoffmeister written about 21 June 1801. Beethoven's wishes were not to be carried out, for the elector died on 26 July and the symphony was subsequently dedicated to Baron van Swieten.

5. 1801–2: deafness.

At a time of personal crisis it was natural for Beethoven's thoughts to turn to his last years in Bonn and to the friends he still had there. One of these – his friend of longest standing, trained in medicine, discreet, remote from Vienna – was particularly suited to be the first recipient of a secret that Beethoven had kept to himself for some years and that had not yet been guessed by his circle of friends in the capital: the appalling discovery that he was going deaf. These tidings were now conveyed to Wegeler in Bonn in a letter of 29 June 1801, and to another absent friend, Karl Amenda in Courland, two days later.

Exactly when Beethoven first detected some impairment in his hearing cannot be determined. Perhaps he did not quite know himself, for no doubt its onset was insidious, and he probably did not regard any temporary periods of deafness or diminished hearing as sinister, especially since he had long become used to spells of fever, abdominal pain and episodes of ill-health. A young man does not expect to go deaf, and although in one account he implied that he had noticed the first symptoms in 1796, other statements set the date somewhat later, and the crisis came only with the growing realization that his deafness was progressive and probably incurable. From the

descriptions of his symptoms there is general agreement among modern otologists that his deafness was caused by otosclerosis of the 'mixed' type, that is, the degeneration of the auditory nerve as well – by no means a rare condition.

At this time Beethoven had not yet given up hope that his doctors could do something for his hearing, but he could already foresee incalculable troubles both for his professional life and – what it is easy to forget was equally important to him – for his social life. As he wrote to Wegeler:

I must confess that I am living a miserable life. For almost two years I have ceased to attend any social functions, just because I find it impossible to say to people: I am deaf. If I had any other profession it would be easier, but in my profession it is a terrible handicap. As for my enemies, of whom I have a fair number, what would they say?

To Amenda he wrote in similar terms: 'Your Beethoven is leading a very unhappy life, and is at variance with Nature and his Creator', but he added that when he was playing and composing his affliction still hampered him least – it affected him most when he was in company. A curious feature of these letters, in fact, is that each includes not only a melancholy account of the despair which his deafness had brought about but also an almost lyrical portrait of his professional and financial successes. Lichnowsky had agreed to pay him an annuity of 600 florins for some years; six or seven publishers were competing for each new work; he was often producing three or four works at the same time; his piano playing had considerably improved: 'why, at the moment I feel equal to anything'.

Four and a half months later Beethoven again wrote at length to Wegeler: his doctors had been unable to help his hearing, but he was leading a slightly more pleasant life.

You can scarcely believe what an empty, sad life I have had for the last two years. My poor hearing haunted me everywhere like a ghost; and I avoided all human society. I was forced to seem a misanthrope, and yet I am far from being one. This change has been brought about by a dear charming girl who loves me and whom I love … and for the first time I feel that marriage might bring me happiness. Unfortunately she is not of my class.

This letter is similar to the earlier ones in containing phrases that are very exalted in tone: 'I will seize Fate by the throat; it shall certainly not crush me completely – Oh it would be so lovely to live a thousand lives'. Such passages, and their more gloomy counterparts, are characteristic of his conflicting moods as he faced the prospect of permanent deafness and the quite unexpected threat to what had hitherto been a triumphant career. An attitude of pious resignation, with which he tried to master such unruly feelings, did not come easily to him but found expression in the six hymn-like settings of sacred poems by Gellert (op.48), which he completed at about this time.

The 'dear charming girl' who was brightening Beethoven's days was no doubt the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi. She was now not quite 17: too young, and perhaps too spoilt, to take Beethoven's devotion very seriously, though no doubt she was flattered for a time by the attentions of a famous composer, a man much admired by her cousins. Much, probably too much, has been made of the fact that it was to her that he dedicated the 'Moonlight' Sonata (op.27 no.2), written in 1801. But it is clear that for a time he was under her spell – she even boasted of this – and he must have had mixed feelings when in November 1803 she married Count Wenzel Robert Gallenberg, a prolific composer of ballet music, who was only a year older than herself.

By the end of 1801 Ferdinand Ries, the son of Franz Anton Ries who had befriended the Beethoven family in Bonn, was living in Vienna, and Beethoven agreed to take him as his piano pupil. Ries was then just 17 and he remained with Beethoven until the autumn of 1805, when he had to return to Bonn for military service. During those four years he had unrivalled opportunities for observing Beethoven at his work, on his walks in the countryside, with his brothers and his friends, or at the social functions of the aristocracy. His recollections of this time, set down somewhat artlessly in the Biographische Notizen which he compiled in collaboration with Wegeler in the 1830s, form a valuably unsentimental picture of Beethoven. A recurring theme in Ries's account is Beethoven's unwillingness, or inability, to conform to the normal conventions of social punctilio, and especially to play the courtier and to oblige by performing to a private audience when requested to do so. These last attitudes, indeed, hardened in later life into a stance in which he felt himself a prince of art and entitled to behave as one.

One particular aspect of Beethoven's behaviour that obviously baffled Ries was his relations with his brothers: he was appalled to see grown men come to blows in the street in the middle of an argument. In ascribing to the

scheming of his brothers many of the difficulties that Beethoven was experiencing both in his relations with friends and in his practical arrangements, Ries may have been loyally taking his teacher's side. There is no doubt, however, that Caspar Carl in particular then played an important part in Beethoven's business affairs. For several years, starting in 1802, he was entrusted with the offer of new compositions to publishers, and with the subsequent negotiations. But on 25 May 1806 he married Johanna Reiss, the daughter of a well-to-do upholsterer; their only child, Karl, was born on 4 September. After that Beethoven largely dispensed with his brother's help, but his nephew later assumed a position of great importance in his life.

The summer of 1802 was spent just outside Vienna in the village of Heiligenstadt. It was there, no doubt, that Beethoven put the finishing touches to the Second Symphony and completed several other works of this prolific year: the three op.30 violin sonatas, the op.33 bagatelles, and perhaps the first two of the op.31 piano sonatas. He had gone to Heiligenstadt in the spring, perhaps with the thought of spending longer in the country than usual for the sake of his health and hearing. Now in October, as he prepared to return to the city, he wrote out a strange document with carefully crafted rhetoric, addressed to his two brothers (though wherever his brother Johann's name was implied there was a blank space). Found among his papers after his death and known as the 'Heiligenstadt Testament', it is dated 6 October 1802 at the beginning and 10 October at the end, and its contents mark it as representing a trough of despondency in his fluctuating moods. His hearing had shown no improvement in the country, and he recognized that his infirmity might be permanent; he defended himself against the charge of misanthropy, and taking leave of his brothers declared that though he had now rejected the notion of suicide, he was ready for death whenever it might come. The Testament has always been recognized as a poignant witness to the despair that often overwhelmed Beethoven at this time.

6. 1803–8.

From that nadir of despondency Beethoven seems to have recovered quickly, and probably by his usual means: hard work. His next activities certainly indicate a firm repudiation of the notion that his deafness would handicap him professionally. Caspar Carl wrote to Breitkopf & Härtel on 12 February 1803:

You will have heard by now that my brother has been engaged by the Wiedener Theater [i.e. Theater an der Wien], he is writing an opera, is in charge of the orchestra, can conduct if necessary, seeing that there is a director already available there every day. He has assumed the chief direction mostly so as to have a chorus for his music.

Although Beethoven had already gained a reputation throughout Europe as a composer of instrumental music, opera was still the royal road to fame. At the time there was something of a dearth of local talent in opera at Vienna, but from the spring of 1802 the importation of operas from Paris had more than compensated for this. Those of Cherubini and to a lesser extent of Méhul became extremely popular; so great indeed was the clamour for Cherubini's music that one of his operas (Les deux journées) was staged at rival theatres on successive nights. Like the other Viennese, Beethoven responded enthusiastically to these operas from revolutionary France, with their contemporary realism and heroic plots (copied in some cases from recent political history). Thus he eagerly took up the invitation to write an opera for Schikaneder's theatre and moved his lodgings to the Theater an der Wien.

An immediate bonus for this appointment was the opportunity to give a concert. He quickly wrote his oratorio Christus am Oelberge, and it was performed on 5 April 1803 together with the First and Second Symphonies and the Third Piano Concerto (with Beethoven as soloist), all but the First Symphony being new to the audience. The oratorio, which tells of the Agony in the Garden (and is known in English-speaking countries as The Mount of Olives), marked Beethoven's first appearance in Vienna as a dramatic vocal composer. Another rapidly written piece was occasioned by the arrival in Vienna of the young violinist George Polgreen Bridgetower: the Kreutzer Violin Sonata (op.47) was played by Bridgetower and the composer on 24 May. He may also have started to look at the opera, Vestas Feuer, with a libretto by Schikaneder.

But something else was evidently pressing: the inner demand to complete a great instrumental work. The writing of the Third Symphony, the Sinfonia eroica, was the major effort of the summer of 1803, which was spent in Oberdöbling. The symphony was originally entitled simply 'Bonaparte', in tribute to the young hero of revolutionary France, who was almost exactly Beethoven's age. But this idealization of Napoleon as a heroic leader gave way to disillusionment when the First Consul proclaimed himself Emperor in May 1804. The story of Beethoven's rage when the news of this reached Vienna is well known: he went to the table where the completed score lay, took hold of the title-page and tore it in two. On its publication in 1806 the symphony was given its present title of 'heroic symphony', and was described as having been 'composed to celebrate the

memory of a great man'. The 'great man' may well have been Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia, who was an esteemed friend of the symphony's dedicatee, Prince Lobkowitz, and who in fact died a hero's death in 1806.

The 'Eroica' Symphony was not the only work by Beethoven from these years that appears to reflect or embody extra-musical ideas of heroism. A similar spirit pervades the so-called Waldstein Sonata (op.53), for instance, composed immediately after the symphony in the last months of 1803, and the 'Appassionata' Sonata (op.57), begun in the following year. Even the string quartets of this period, the three of op.59 completed in the summer of 1806 and dedicated to Count Rasumovsky, are cast in the same mould.

In comparison with the exhilarating work on these instrumental pieces, the opera dragged: by the end of 1803 Beethoven had completed less than two scenes of Vestas Feuer, and he abandoned it. For a more attractive operatic libretto had come his way, and was to capture his imagination to a profound extent. This was J.-N. Bouilly's Léonore, ou L'amour conjugal. The plot – the tale of a political prisoner's rescue from a Spanish Bastille, engineered by his wife disguised as a man – is said to have been based on a real incident in the French Revolution. At first, no doubt, Beethoven was drawn by the opportunity that it afforded of writing a grand 'rescue' opera similar to those of the admired Cherubini, and on 4 January 1804 he informed the Leipzig critic Rochlitz that he was beginning to work on it. But the profounder implications that the story held for his own psychology will have emerged as the labour progressed; oppressed and isolated by his undeserved deafness, it was easy for him to identify with the unjustly imprisoned Florestan who lay alone in the dark with no apparent hope of rescue. (In the same way Christ's 'cup of sorrow' in the oratorio of 1803 seems to have been linked in Beethoven's mind with his own affliction.) And it was surely another side of his nature that could feel empathy with the spirited and ever-devoted Leonore; sustained by her vision of hope and longing, and following her 'inner drive', she is in some ways an even more Beethovenian figure than Florestan.

A change in the ownership of the Theater an der Wien in February 1804 rendered void Beethoven's contract to write an opera for the house. It may also have obliged him in due course to find new lodgings; at all events he arranged to share rooms with Stephan von Breuning, but a serious quarrel – induced mainly by Beethoven, it seems – broke out between the two friends, and by July Beethoven had moved for some weeks to Baden, a resort some 16 miles south of Vienna. Breuning reacted philosophically and with forbearance, and in November wrote to Wegeler, who knew them both well: 'You cannot conceive what an indescribable, I might say fearful, effect the gradual loss of his hearing has had on him'. The breach was made up, but in spite of some invigorating events, such as the first (private) performance of the 'Eroica', this was not a happy summer for Beethoven, and for a time he may have thought of leaving Vienna altogether – perhaps for Paris. But towards the end of the year his contract for the opera was renewed, and he set to work on it again.

Apart from the opera there was another reason for Beethoven to remain in Vienna. In January 1804 Count Deym, the husband of Josephine von Brunsvik, had died; the young widow, who now had four small children, continued to spend much of her time in Vienna, and by the autumn Beethoven, who had remained in touch with the family, became a frequent visitor to the house. He gave Josephine piano lessons. An intense relationship soon developed between them, the nature and course of which must be inferred from the contents of 13 letters that Beethoven wrote to Josephine between the autumn of 1804 and the autumn of 1807, and from drafts of some of her replies (these documents were first published in 1957). Beethoven, it is clear, was passionately in love; Josephine, though moved by his devotion and keenly concerned with his happiness, his ideals and his art, retained a certain reserve throughout and rejected any intimacy closer than that of warm friendship. It would not be hard to find reasons why, after one unhappy marriage and with a young family now claiming her concern, she should be reluctant to throw in her lot with someone of Beethoven's uncontrolled nature, his want of much that passed for conventional good manners, and his unimpressive social standing. In the view of her sentimental unmarried sister Therese (writing many years after these events) it was consideration for her children that proved the decisive factor with Josephine. But a social barrier surely worked to keep the pair apart as well; it is noteworthy both that they were anxious to conceal the extent of their intimacy from the Brunsvik relatives, and that in addressing each other they used the formal 'Sie', not the more intimate 'du', which he kept for her brother, Count Franz Brunsvik.

The most intense period of the relationship was at the end of 1804 and in the first months of 1805: close to the time at which Beethoven was composing the triumphant finale of his opera, a paean to the accomplishments of a virtuous wife and to 'married love'. It came to an end by the autumn of 1807, with rueful scenes and misunderstandings, and with Beethoven still asking for closer contact than Josephine was prepared to concede. The following summer she left Vienna, and in 1810 married a Baron von Stackelberg; her second marriage, like her first, was not a happy one. She died in 1821.

By the summer of 1805 the opera was complete, but censorship difficulties postponed its first performance until 20 November. This had unfortunate consequences for its success, for in the preceding weeks the conquering French armies were advancing on Vienna. On 9 November the empress departed, and four days later Napoleon's troops entered the city. Thus the audience for the opera's first night consisted not of the Austrian nobility and moneyed classes, Beethoven's natural supporters and admirers, who had mostly fled from the capital, but of a miscellaneous crowd that included a sprinkling of French officers. Its reception was not enthusiastic, and after the third performance it was dropped. But with the return of Beethoven's friends to Vienna and the resumption of normal conditions there was pressure for the opera's revival, though also a general agreement that it had failed in part from its excessive length and in particular from the slowness of some of the earlier scenes. Beethoven was persuaded to make drastic cuts, which he did only with the greatest reluctance, for while some of these undoubtedly speeded the dramatic pace, others were mutilating. For the new version he provided an overture, Leonore no.3, which was itself a revision of the first production's overture (Leonore no.2). In its altered form the opera was now given two performances (29 March and 10 April 1806); then Beethoven was involved in a dispute with the director of the theatre, Baron Braun, and withdrew his score. It was not for another eight years that the opera was again seen on the stage. It had always been Beethoven's intention for the opera to be known as Leonore; but in both 1805 and 1806 it was billed as Fidelio, and for the 1814 production (see below) he acquiesced in that name. (The title Leonore is nowadays often used to distinguish the 1805 and 1806 versions from the more familiar 1814 one.)

The twin distractions of his opera and of his love for Josephine, and perhaps (at a deeper level) his slow adjustment to the fact of his deafness, may have led to some falling off in the quantity of new compositions during 1804 and 1805. But the period from the spring of 1806 to the end of 1808 must be regarded as one of prodigious fertility, with a steady stream of completed works, many of them on the largest scale. A comment that he wrote down among the sketches that date from the summer of 1806, some of which was spent in Silesia at the country seats of Prince Lichnowsky and Count Oppersdorff, reveals something of his optimistic and resolute mood: 'Just as you plunge yourself here into the whirlpool of society, so in spite of all social obstacles it is possible for you to write operas. Your deafness shall be a secret no more, even where art is involved!'.

Among the works completed before the end of the year were the three string quartets dedicated to the Russian ambassador Count Rasumovsky, the 'Appassionata' Sonata, some at least of which had been composed earlier, the Fourth Symphony, the Violin Concerto (op.61), and in all essentials the Fourth Piano Concerto. They were quickly introduced to the public. The Violin Concerto, a work completed very rapidly, was performed by Franz Clement on 23 December 1806, and the Fourth Symphony and Fourth Piano Concerto were included at two concerts given at the palace of Prince Lobkowitz in March 1807, together with a new overture, to Collin's tragedy Coriolan. A further overture, apparently written for a planned production of his opera at Prague, was also composed around this time but never performed in public; it came to light only after Beethoven's death and is now known by the illogical title of 'Leonore no.1' (op.138).

With the exception of the first two Rasumovsky quartets, which were at first found 'difficult', these great works delighted the discerning Viennese audiences and enhanced Beethoven's fame throughout Europe. There were many signs of this. In April 1807 Muzio Clementi, then head of a prominent London firm of music publishers and piano makers, called on Beethoven in Vienna and secured the exclusive English rights to some of his newest compositions. And, nearer home, he received an invitation from Prince Nicolaus Esterházy II, Haydn's last patron, to produce a mass in celebration of his wife's name day in September 1807. This was a commission that made Beethoven unusually nervous. The type of composition required was not merely one in which he was inexperienced; it was one that had been mastered with special excellence by Haydn, who in the years up to 1802 had written six such masses for the princess's name day. Comparisons between Haydn's works and that of his one-time pupil were therefore inevitable. And in the event the Mass in C (op.86) was not well received, though Beethoven himself regarded it highly. After passing the summer in Baden working on the mass, he went to Eisenstadt for its first performance, on 13 September; later he spent some time at Heiligenstadt, no doubt completing the Fifth Symphony and his A major Cello Sonata (op.69) in the next few months. Some of the ideas for the symphony had been jotted down as early as the first months of 1804, but 1807 was the year that the main writing was done – and probably not before the mass was out of the way. Nor was there any slackening in the pace of composition in the next year, 1808. In fact that summer (which he again spent at Heiligenstadt) saw the writing of one of his largest and most characteristic works, the Sixth Symphony, called Sinfonia pastorale. He followed this directly with the two op.70 piano trios.

Yet behind all this flurry of creative activity there was one problem to which Beethoven had not yet found a satisfactory solution. He had no regular or dependable source of income. He could of course count on the generosity of the aristocratic circles that continued to admire him, on the fees payable for dedications, and on the

sales of his music to publishers. Yet this was little enough to rely on; he was, after all, living in the city in which Mozart had died in poverty a decade and a half earlier, partly no doubt from having no adequately paid position. It was not easy for him to arrange a concert from which he could secure the receipts, since most concerts were private aristocratic affairs, or they were given for charity – at which Beethoven usually offered his services. There was occasionally the opportunity of obtaining one of the theatres for a benefit performance at a time when they were otherwise closed (Holy Week or around Christmas), but this often led to disappointments – in 1802, for instance, and again in 1807. In the latter year, therefore, he petitioned the Directors of the Imperial Theatres for a commission to compose an opera every year, for an income of 2400 florins; and he urged strongly his claim, whether this petition was granted or not, for an annual benefit day at one of the theatres. The petition contained a hint that otherwise he might have to leave Vienna. The reply (if any) of the Directors has not survived. No operatic commission followed, but after several postponements the Theater an der Wien was finally put at his disposal for the night of 22 December 1808, partly in just recognition of his services to charity; so he arranged to give an enormous benefit concert.

The working out of that evening contained many features characteristic of Beethoven. The programme was injudicious, consisting as it did of four hours of music, virtually all of it unfamiliar: first performances of the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies, and first public performances in Vienna of the Fourth Piano Concerto (with Beethoven as soloist) and portions of the Mass in C, as well as a piece written in Prague 12 years before, the scena and aria Ah! perfido (op.65); in addition Beethoven was to improvise. As if that were not enough for the audience, he decided the evening needed a finale; and since a chorus was already available, he rapidly threw together the work now known as the 'Choral Fantasy' (op.80). This consisted of an introduction for piano solo (extemporized by Beethoven at the first performance), several variations for piano and orchestra on a simple song melody that he had written in the 1790s, and a short choral conclusion.

Written at the last minute, the work was under-rehearsed; the orchestra, already on bad terms with Beethoven after a dispute in rehearsals for an earlier charity concert, broke down in the middle of the Fantasy and had to be restarted; Beethoven had quarrelled with the original soprano for the aria and her very young replacement was inadequate; and the theatre was bitterly cold. Thus the success of the evening was very mixed. The financial results are not known.

7. 1809–12.

Even before the concert took place Beethoven had received the offer of a regular position: that of Kapellmeister at Kassel, where Napoleon's youngest brother Jerome Bonaparte, a youth in his early 20s, had been installed as 'King of Westphalia'. But although Beethoven usually had some sharp words for the Viennese, and continued to criticize them for the rest of his life, it is plain that he had no intentions of leaving Vienna if that could possibly be avoided. The Kassel appointment, with few obligations attached, was worth 600 ducats, plus 150 ducats travelling expenses: a total corresponding to about 3400 florins annually; moreover it was for life, or at any rate for as long as the 'king' retained his throne. Beethoven now used it to obtain a matching offer from Vienna. Although his initial conditions for remaining there included the guarantee of an annual concert and contained a strong desire for the title of Imperial Kapellmeister, their essence was a yearly salary of 4000 florins. And this after a month or two of negotiation he was able to obtain. A document dated 1 March 1809 guaranteed that its three signatories would provide Beethoven with an annuity for as long as he remained domiciled in Vienna; since it covered accidents and old age it also amounted to an insurance policy and a pension. The signatories were the Archduke Rudolph (1500 florins) and the Princes Lobkowitz (700 florins) and Kinsky (1800 florins). There were, as will be seen, difficulties in ensuring the regularity and the full value of the payments, but once those problems were overcome Beethoven was relieved from any rational grounds for financial worry.

Something must be said here about the Archduke Rudolph, the Emperor Franz's youngest brother, and not only the highest born but the most devoted of Beethoven's patrons. Born in 1788, he was destined for the church. As a boy he showed an aptitude for music, and at some time in his teens – perhaps in the winter of 1803–4, when he became 16 – he chose Beethoven as his piano teacher. Later he became Beethoven's only pupil in composition. The relationship, which lasted without interruption until Beethoven's death (Rudolph himself died four years later at the age of 43), was characterized by genuine respect on both sides. Rudolph treated Beethoven with consideration and humorous understanding; and Beethoven, though irked and sometimes provoked into ill-behaviour by the inevitable court protocol that surrounded a royal archduke, showed an almost childlike devotion to Rudolph, to whom he dedicated several of his greatest works. There are, it is true, many letters that show him begging off giving a lesson because of particularly pressing business or 'illness'; most of those pleas were accepted by the benevolent Rudolph as polite fictions.

The warmth of this relationship was to be highlighted by several incidents in the months that followed the signing of the annuity. For the second time within four years a French army bore down on Vienna, causing the imperial family, including Rudolph, to leave the city. Nevertheless it was decided that Vienna should be defended. As a result the city was bombarded by French howitzers throughout the night of 11 May and the following morning. Beethoven is said to have taken refuge in the cellar of Caspar Carl's house, and to have covered his head with pillows. On the afternoon of 12 May the city surrendered, and there was a second French occupation; it lasted for two months and proved a heavy drain on the inhabitants' pockets.

The summer of 1809 was a miserable one for Beethoven. Almost all his friends had, like the court, fled from the city, and communication with the outside world was greatly restricted. Nor could he search for inspiration and recreation in the countryside. He spent some weeks therefore in copying extracts from the theoretical works of C.P.E. Bach, Türk, Kirnberger, Fux and Albrechtsberger, as part of a course of instruction that he was preparing for the Archduke Rudolph. But his thoughts about his absent patron were expressed more touchingly in the programmatic 'Lebewohl' or 'Les adieux' Sonata (op.81a), the three movements of which depict his sorrowful farewell ('Das Lebewohl') to Rudolph on his departure from Vienna on 4 May 1809, his sadness at Rudolph's absence ('Abwesenheit'), and his rejoicing at seeing him again ('Wiedersehn') on his return on 30 January 1810. (Beethoven intended not only the titles but the dates to be inserted in the published work.) The sonata seems to have been completed in 1809 in anticipation of Rudolph's return, and was dedicated to him. Earlier in the year, before the French invasion, Beethoven finished the greater part of the Fifth Piano Concerto, also dedicated to Rudolph. The third important work of the year – like the concerto and the 'Lebewohl' Sonata in E – was the so-called 'Harp' String Quartet (op.74). Several other smaller pieces were also completed before the end of the year: not only the F major Piano Sonata (op.78), a work of which he himself thought very highly, but also the Sonata in G (op.79), the Piano Fantasia (op.77) and a number of songs. Beethoven's productivity even in one of his less productive years could be formidable.

Towards the end of the year a highly congenial commission came Beethoven's way, since it brought him in touch with the theatre once more, and since the play in question was by Goethe, whom he admired above all writers then living. It had been decided to furnish Goethe's Egmont with incidental music, and Beethoven was invited to supply it; he completed it by June 1810 and it was immediately performed. Apart from the excitement of the plot itself, in which Count Egmont foresees the liberation of the Netherlands from Spanish rule but dies as a result of his own brave stand, it is possible to suggest a deeper reason behind Beethoven's heartfelt response to it: it may represent his own delayed reaction to the conquest and occupation of his adopted city by the French, and his hopes of being delivered from them. In the spring or summer of 1810 he also wrote three songs (op.83) to words by Goethe, and he learnt about the poet's character through the friendship that he now formed with the very young, talented and seductive Bettina Brentano, a friend of Goethe – whom in turn she kept informed by letter about Beethoven.

Bettina obviously charmed Beethoven; rather less is known about another woman with whom he had been more seriously involved only a little earlier. For it seems clear that in the spring of 1810 Beethoven was more or less solemnly considering marriage. Not only did he turn his attention to his wardrobe and personal appearance; he even wrote to his old friend Wegeler in Bonn for a copy of his baptismal certificate, necessary evidence of his exact age. The woman who was the object of these concerns was a certain Therese Malfatti, the niece of Dr Johann Malfatti who had become his physician for a short while after the death of the trusted Dr Schmidt in 1808 (his doctor since about 1801). It looks as though Beethoven made a proposal of marriage and it was turned down. No doubt it was radically misconceived; there is no evidence that the family of Therese, who was not yet 20, would have found Beethoven, then in his 40th year, an acceptable suitor, and the one surviving letter from him to her, though warm enough, is not particularly intimate. Beethoven's disappointment is hard to gauge. He was urged to travel, perhaps because of his distracted state, but instead he merely moved to Baden for two months. The compositions on which he worked that summer include the String Quartet in F minor (op.95) – the 'quartetto serioso' – and the so-called 'Archduke' Piano Trio in B (op.97); although their autograph scores bear dates of October 1810 and March 1811 respectively, it is possible that both works were completed later than the dates suggest. The earlier months of 1811 seem to have been a time of comparative inactivity in composing, though a number of larger works, including the Choral Fantasy and the oratorio written several years earlier, had to be seen through the press.

Beethoven's health was still not satisfactory, and in the summer of 1811, on Dr Malfatti's orders, he visited the Bohemian spa Teplitz (now Tepliče) to take the cure. While there he wrote the incidental music to two stage works by Kotzebue, König Stephan (op.117) and Die Ruinen von Athen (op.113), designed as prologue and epilogue to the ceremonial opening of the new theatre at Pest. He evidently returned to Vienna refreshed and

began work on the Seventh Symphony, which he completed in the spring of 1812, going on without a break to the Eighth Symphony. (To judge from the sketchbook used for work on these symphonies, he at one time considered following them with a third, probably in D minor.) For the second year running Beethoven decided to visit Teplitz, travelling via Prague and arriving there on 5 July. Next morning he started to write a love-letter to an unknown woman, which – since it has been discussed almost as much as any music he ever wrote – will be considered shortly. Because of the international situation (Napoleon's invasion of Russia was just getting under way), Teplitz, which was neutral territory, became the meeting-place of many imperial personages and diplomats. But what was even more interesting to Beethoven was the presence there of Goethe, and the long-awaited meeting between them finally took place. The contact was a cordial one, the reactions of the two men predictable. To his friend Zelter, Goethe confided:

His talent amazed me; unfortunately he is an utterly untamed personality, who is not altogether in the wrong in holding the world to be detestable but surely does not make it any the more enjoyable either for himself or for others by his attitude. He is easily excused, on the other hand, and much to be pitied, as his hearing is leaving him, which perhaps mars the musical part of his nature less than the social.

Beethoven's somewhat more censorious comment in a letter to Breitkopf & Härtel was: 'Goethe delights far too much in the court atmosphere, far more than is becoming in a poet'. In fact Beethoven's admiration for his fellow men usually flourished best at a distance.

From Teplitz he went, allegedly on a new doctor's advice, to Karlsbad (now Karlovy Vary), and from there to Franzensbrunn, where he participated in a charity concert held for the victims of a fire at Baden that had destroyed a large part of the resort. He then revisited Karlsbad, and finally returned once more to Teplitz, still apparently in search of improved health. At the beginning of October he was in Linz, where he started the score of the Eighth Symphony; he stayed with his brother Johann, who had bought an apothecary's shop there in 1808. But this was less of a visit than a visitation, for the principal purpose of his journey to Linz was to interfere in his brother's private life. Johann had let part of his house to a physician from Vienna, whose wife's unmarried sister, one Therese Obermeyer, later joined them. Subsequently Therese became Johann's mistress, and Beethoven now descended to expostulate with his brother and to attempt to end the relationship. He applied both to the bishop and to the civil authorities, and ultimately obtained a police order to have the girl expelled from Linz. But before it could be effective Johann played a trump card by marrying Therese, on 8 November. Beethoven's extravagantly high-handed behaviour had ended in defeat, and he retired angrily to Vienna. Nothing more is heard of him that year apart from the preparations for a concert with the French violinist Pierre Rode on 29 December, for which he completed the G major Violin Sonata (op.96).

The rebuff by his brother was the second emotional crisis of 1812, a year that represented some sort of watershed for Beethoven. To return to the letter of 6–7 July: usually known as the letter to the 'Immortal Beloved' ('unsterbliche Geliebte'), it was found among Beethoven's papers after his death, and first published in 1840. There is no direct indication to whom this passionate love-letter, the only one of his to a woman that uses the intimate 'du' throughout, was addressed. Even the year in which it was written (it refers only to 'Monday, 6 July') was for long uncertain. Thus the names of many women known to have been admired by Beethoven were proposed by his early biographers; but nearly all of them have had to be ruled out, since 1812 is now established as the correct date of the letter, Teplitz as its place of origin and Karlsbad ('K' in the letter) as its addressee's temporary residence.

Maynard Solomon showed in the 1970s that she was Antonie Brentano, an aristocratic Viennese lady ten years younger than Beethoven who at 18 had married a Frankfurt businessman, Franz Brentano, Bettina Brentano's half-brother (As there are no explicit letters from Antonie Brentano to Beethoven, some do not accept that the case is closed; but no plausible alternative has been presented.). The Brentanos were in Vienna in the years 1809–12, so that Antonie could be with her dying father and subsequently wind up his estate. It is clear not merely that she disliked the idea of returning to Frankfurt, where she was most unhappy, but that she did everything possible to postpone it, delaying the event until the last months of 1812. Beethoven had been introduced to the family by Bettina in 1810, and became a warm friend not only of Antonie but of her husband Franz and their ten-year-old daughter Maximiliane – for whom in June 1812 he wrote an easy piano trio in one movement (woo39). Since the Brentanos had not only been in close contact with Beethoven in Vienna shortly before his departure at the end of June, but were also in Prague while he was there (2–4 July) and moved on to Karlsbad on 5 July, Antonie Brentano fulfils all the chronological and topographical requirements for being the addressee of the famous letter.

Although in many ways a dutiful wife, Antonie's admiration of Beethoven was profound, and she may have become emotionally dependent on him, especially when the return to Frankfurt seemed inevitable. And there is no doubt that Beethoven, though vociferous in his condemnation of adulterous relations, was especially attracted to women who were married or who were in some other way already involved with a man. Beethoven's letter is not only passionate but also confused, agitated and more than a little ambiguous. Beethoven describes his harrowing trip to Teplitz from Prague, where the relationship reached a crisis; Antonie may have known or suspected that she was pregnant (she gave birth on 8 March 1813). Mingled with the ardently expressed desire for complete union with the beloved ('I will arrange it with you and me that I can live with you') there are many phrases expressing resignation or acceptance of the lack of fulfilment, and it is possible to read it as a cautious rejection of a shared domesticity: 'At my age I need a steady, quiet life – can it be so in our connection?'. Doubtless the ambiguities were clarified when, later in the month, Beethoven joined the Brentanos at Karlsbad. The family duly returned to Frankfurt in the autumn; Beethoven never saw them again, though he remained in touch with them, calling on Franz's services as a businessman in 1820 and dedicating important works to Antonie (op.120, in 1823) and Maximiliane (op.109, in 1821).

8. 1813–21.

However the turmoil of the summer of 1812 is to be understood, it proved to be a profound turning-point in Beethoven's emotional life. It initiated a long period of markedly reduced creativity, and there is evidence that he became deeply depressed. Henceforth Beethoven accepted the impossibility of achieving a sustained relationship with a woman and entering into a shared domestic routine, though he was scarcely reconciled to it; even in 1816, as will be seen, he had by no means overcome his longing. Some of the hints contained in the letter are stated more baldly in diary entries made about this time. As in past crises, a dedication to art was evidently to replace a commitment to a human being: 'Thou mayst no longer be a man, not for thyself, only for others, for thee there is no longer happiness except in thyself, in thy art – O God, give me strength to conquer myself, nothing must fetter me to life'. '13 May 1813. To forgo a great act which might be and might remain so … O God, God, look down on the unhappy B., do not let it continue like this any longer'.

But by a stroke of irony that may contain an inner truth, at this very time he pledged himself to a responsibility that was increasingly to encroach on the exercise of his art and indeed to dominate his emotional outlook in the last 12 years of his life. Caspar Carl became seriously ill with tuberculosis, and on 12 April 1813 he signed a declaration appointing Beethoven guardian of his son Karl, then aged six, in the event of his death. This, it will emerge, came ultimately to involve Beethoven profoundly; but for the moment Caspar Carl's health improved, though Beethoven was obliged to help him to borrow money.

At this time Beethoven too was financially embarrassed. The severe depreciation of the Austrian currency as a result of the war, leading to an official devaluation in February 1811, had reduced the value of his annuity of 4000 florins to little more than 1600 florins. It was open to the princes to restore the intended income, and they were prepared to do so; but unfortunately Prince Kinsky was killed by a fall from his horse at the end of 1812 before he could leave clear instructions, and Prince Lobkowitz's payments were suspended for four years from 1811 owing to the mismanagement of his affairs. So although Beethoven was ultimately to receive the full amount from Kinsky's heirs, from Lobkowitz and from the Archduke Rudolph, it was only the last-named whose subventions continued without interruption or depreciation.

This may be one reason why Beethoven, even though he was still nursing secret sorrows, nevertheless became more of a public and social figure in the next year or so, reaching for popular acclaim by way of the concert hall and the theatre. He not only engaged a servant, but appears to have kept him for three years. And he entered with some zest into the proposal of Johann Nepomuk Maelzel, the inventor of a mechanical organ called the 'panharmonicon' (and later, inventor of a metronome), for the two of them to collaborate on a piece that both celebrated and depicted Wellington's military victory at Vittoria on 21 June 1813. This bombastic piece of programme music, with its fanfares, cannonades, and fugal treatment of God Save the King, was thunderously acclaimed at two charity concerts on 8 and 12 December 1813 – together with the Seventh Symphony, which had not been heard before. The 'Battle Symphony' had to be repeated three weeks later, and again on 24 February 1814. On that occasion the Eighth Symphony was one of its companion pieces.

The most gratifying (and unexpected) consequence of this sudden popularity was a request from the Kärntnertortheater for permission to revive the opera Fidelio. Beethoven agreed but stipulated that there would have to be a good many changes. The poet G.F. Treitschke was then stage manager at the theatre, and he undertook to make the necessary alterations in the libretto. Some weak numbers were omitted, the two finales were rewritten, Leonore's aria was supplied with a new recitative ('Abscheulicher!') and Florestan's with a new

final section, and there were many smaller changes throughout. Beethoven also furnished the revival with a new overture in E major, called today the 'Overture to Fidelio'. Although he grumbled at the labour and claimed in a letter to Treitschke that the opera would win him a martyr's crown, the revision was effective, and the work's success dates from this production, first given on 23 May 1814 (fig.6). The new overture, not ready for the opening night, was given at the second performance, on 26 May.

The vocal score of the opera was prepared by the young pianist Ignaz Moscheles, then just 20. Since he worked under Beethoven's supervision, the task brought him for a time into regular contact with someone he had for long ardently admired. And March 1814 was the date at which another enthusiastic follower of Beethoven later said he had first been introduced to him: this was the 18-year-old Anton Schindler, at the time a law student and a good violinist. For Schindler the claims of music proved stronger than those of the law, and by 1822 he was leader of the orchestra at the Theater in der Josefstadt. From about that time he began to spend many of his leisure hours in Beethoven's company, and for a while he virtually became his unpaid secretary and servant. Beethoven found his 'factotum' useful in practical matters, though Schindler's obsequiousness used to irritate him. Some years after Beethoven's death, in 1840, Schindler published a hastily written biography – translated into English a year later, with notes by Moscheles – in which uncritical devotion to 'the master' was combined with polemics against many of the others who had been close to him. Thus it is unfortunately unreliable even in its account of the years after 1821 during which Schindler was often in very close contact with the composer; the material of value that it contains is hard to distinguish from his fabrications. A later (1860) edition of his biography, although greatly expanded and indeed largely rewritten, was no more accurate.

In the summer of 1814 excitement began to mount in Vienna as preparations were made to welcome the crowned heads of Europe for the Congress of Vienna. This gave Beethoven the opportunity for producing more 'occasional pieces'. But before starting work on anything of that nature, he quickly completed a piano sonata (op.90), his first in four years. The earliest of the congress works was a short chorus of welcome to the visiting sovereigns, Ihr weisen Gründer (woo95). Next, he made a strenuous attempt to complete an overture in C that he had taken up and worked on at various times in the previous five years; it was planned for the celebration of the emperor's name day on 4 October and is now known as the Namensfeier Overture (op.115). But the score could not be completed in time, and Beethoven put it aside until the spring of 1815, setting to work instead on a cantata celebrating the present 'glorious moment' in the destiny of Europe. The fawningly inflated text of Der glorreiche Augenblick (op.136) was by a distinguished surgeon from Salzburg, Alois Weissenbach, who had come to the capital for the festivities. Beethoven could not have had a more enthusiastic admirer than Weissenbach; when the two men met, they took a great liking to each other, and the cantata was a result of their collaboration. They had more than music in common, for Weissenbach too was deaf. The cantata was announced for a concert on 20 November, but it was postponed three times and finally given before the assembled royalty on 29 November, with the 'Battle Symphony' and Seventh Symphony forming the rest of the programme.

From the point of view of Viennese popular acclaim and fame the year 1814 must be regarded as the high-water mark in Beethoven's life. Not only were his compositions applauded by large audiences, but he also received in person the commendations of royal dignitaries. This last aspect is typified in one final congress piece, the little Polonaise (op.89) that he wrote in December 1814 in honour of the Empress of Russia, who was especially generous to him. And 1814 was also a more sombre turning-point for Beethoven, for two performances of the 'Archduke' Trio in April and May marked his last appearance in public as a pianist (except as accompanist). His deafness had latterly become much more severe.

Beethoven now found himself possessed not only of fame but of a good deal of money, which he invested in bank shares. Moreover, as a result of a settlement reached with the Kinsky family and the goodwill of Prince Lobkowitz, most of the original value of the annuity had now been restored and the arrears made up. In spite of this, his worries about his financial situation continued to be voiced in letters to publishers and friends abroad (such as his former pupil Ries, now resident in London), whom he was trying to interest in the large number of his more recent works that were still unpublished. But towards the end of 1815 an unhappy event occurred that immediately focussed all his concerns and anxieties. His brother Caspar Carl's health suddenly deteriorated; the tuberculosis had evidently made inconspicuous but rapid progress, and he collapsed and died on 15 November. The will, dated 14 November, appointed Beethoven sole guardian of his only child, the nine-year-old Karl, but a codicil of the same day cancelled this and made the boy's mother co-guardian:

Having learnt that my brother ... desires after my death to take wholly to himself my son Karl, and wholly to withdraw him from the supervision and training of his mother, and inasmuch as the best of harmony does not exist between my brother and my wife, I have found it necessary to add to my will that I by no means desire that my son be taken away from his mother, but that he shall always and so long as his future career permits remain

with his mother, to which end the guardianship of him is to be exercised by her as well as by my brother ... for the welfare of my child I recommend compliance to my wife and more moderation to my brother. God permit them to be harmonious for the sake of my child's welfare. This is the last wish of the dying husband and brother.

The dying man's anxieties were all too prophetic. It proved a tragedy for Beethoven that he could not do what his brother asked. It was not simply that he was unable to achieve any 'harmony' with his sister-in-law Johanna. The situation in which he found himself was one that aroused deep passions and longings that he doubtless did not fully understand. Frustrated in his several attempts – however ambiguously conceived and executed – to marry and have a family of his own, he began to feel that if he had sole responsibility for Karl he could combine the discharge of a sacred duty to his brother with some of the satisfactions and fulfilments of parenthood. But for that to be possible, he had first to convince himself and others that Johanna was quite unfit to have the custody of Karl and should be excluded from the guardianship. The struggle for possession of the nephew lasted some four and a half years, to be followed by another six in which his care and upbringing weighed heavily upon Beethoven. As will be seen, the burdensome intensity of the relationship between uncle and nephew – or as Beethoven preferred to see it, between father and son – led to something near disaster in the summer of 1826. Before then an incalculable number of hours had been spent by Beethoven in litigation, letter-writing, quarrels, reconciliations and private agony of mind.

On 22 November 1815 the Imperial and Royal Landrechte of Lower Austria appointed Johanna guardian and Beethoven 'co-guardian'. Six days later Beethoven appealed to the court requesting the guardianship to be transferred to himself. In a later court appearance he claimed he could produce 'weighty reasons' for the total exclusion of the widow from the guardianship: four years earlier Johanna had been convicted and jailed on a charge of embezzlement. The result of Beethoven's submissions was that on 9 January 1816 he was assigned sole guardianship by the court. He took vows for the performance of his duties on 19 January. On 2 February Karl was taken from his mother and entered the private school of a certain Cajetan Giannatasio del Rio as a boarder.

Beethoven seems to have had little difficulty in persuading himself that Johanna was morally quite unfit to have charge of Karl, and he was ready to denounce her character and her way of life on every possible occasion, calling her the 'Queen of Night' and insinuating that her allegedly deviant behaviour included prostitution and theft. She was certainly no moral exemplar, and some time after her husband's death she took a lover and gave birth in 1820 to an illegitimate daughter. But Viennese society was permissive in sexual matters. Few of her contemporaries saw her in the same lurid light as her brother-in-law, in spite of the forceful and relentless way that he marshalled the case against her.

Although convinced of Johanna's unsuitability for bringing up the child, Beethoven felt rather guilty about restricting them from seeing each other. Yet that is what he now asked the Landrechte to put in his control, and the court agreed that Johanna should visit her son only at hours and places that Beethoven sanctioned – which at times was liable to mean once a month, or even less frequently. An uneasy truce was maintained between Beethoven and Johanna through 1816 and 1817, although he suspected her of making clandestine visits to Karl's school. At the end of January 1818 he withdrew Karl from Giannatasio's care and took him into his own home, engaging a private tutor; then in May he moved with Karl to Mödling and placed him in a class taught by the village priest, named Fröhlich. But after a month, to Beethoven's indignation, Fröhlich expelled Karl for his bad behaviour. This seems to have consisted of a series of minor offences against discipline, but Karl particularly shocked the priest by speaking of his mother in abusive terms – a breach of the Fifth Commandment in which, it was later noted, Beethoven had gleefully encouraged him.

It was at this point in the summer of 1818, when Beethoven was taking preparatory steps to enter Karl in the Vienna Gymnasium, that Johanna made a further effort to gain some control of her son's education and welfare. With the help of a relative with legal training, Jacob Hotschevar, she presented a series of petitions to the Landrechte. The first two were rejected, but after Karl had run away from Beethoven's lodgings to his mother on 3 December – he was returned later by the police – she used the incident as the basis of a third appeal, supporting it by a careful summary of the whole situation from Hotschevar and appending a statement from Father Fröhlich on the boy's neglected physical state and moral lapses. In the course of giving evidence in court on 11 December Beethoven incautiously let slip the fact that Karl was not of noble birth. He was then forced to concede that neither he nor his late brother had ever had documents to prove their own nobility; 'van' was a Dutch prefix that was not restricted to those of noble birth. Thereupon the Landrechte, which were courts confined to the nobility, woke up to the fact that the case should never have come before them and transferred the whole matter to the Vienna Magistracy or commoners' courts.

How severe a blow this was to Beethoven's pride has been debated; but even from a practical point of view it was very inconvenient. From the start the Magistracy seems to have been more sympathetic to Johanna than to Beethoven. Its first action was to suspend him temporarily from the guardianship. Karl returned for a time to his mother, being instructed by a tutor and also being taught at an institute run by one Johann Kudlich. From March to July Beethoven resigned the guardianship in favour of a Councillor Tuscher, and applied for a passport to enable Karl to be educated in Bavaria. This was refused, and his right to resume the guardianship in July was also challenged; on 17 September the court decided, reasonably enough, that Karl (who had meanwhile been moved to yet another school, one run by a Pestalozzi disciple, Joseph Blöchlinger) had been 'tossed back and forth like a ball from one educational institution to another'. The mother, therefore, should remain as legal guardian in collaboration with a certain Leopold Nussböck, the municipal sequestrator.

This was of course a defeat for Beethoven. His first move was to protest at the decision; this was rejected by the Magistracy on 4 November. Next, with the help of a legally qualified friend, Johann Baptist Bach, he proposed as a substitute for Nussböck his friend Karl Peters, who was tutor to the children of Prince Lobkowitz. This application too was rejected. He now had recourse to the Court of Appeal, for whose benefit he prepared a 48-page draft memorandum (the longest extant document in his handwriting). This denounced in turn Johanna, a certain Herr Piuk who was a member of the Magistracy, and Father Fröhlich, and defended his own conduct and educational policies in great detail. It is unlikely that the memorandum was ever submitted in the form in which it survives. Beethoven's case was shrewdly and discreetly presented by Dr Bach; less discreet were Beethoven's attempts to influence the Court by making known his connection to the Archduke Rudolph. Demanding the guardianship of Karl and requesting Karl Peters as associate guardian, Beethoven asked at the same time for Johanna and Nussböck to be deposed. After further scrutiny these claims were upheld by the Court of Appeal on 8 April 1820; a petition by Johanna to the emperor against the decision was rejected three months later. Thus in July 1820 Beethoven found that he had finally won in a struggle that had lasted for over four years.

Beethoven's preoccupation with the care of his nephew – especially in the period from the end of 1815 to the beginning of 1818 – can be regarded as a continuation, and in some ways as an attempted solution, of the unresolved matrimonial crisis of 1812. At that time he had decided, however confusedly and irresolutely, that his creative activity was incompatible with having a wife; now he was testing whether it could be reconciled with caring for a child. The cost of those years to Beethoven is reflected in the paucity of valuable music completed in them. Productively the years 1813–15 were lean; apart from two cello sonatas (op.102) written in the second half of 1815, most of the compositions were 'occasional pieces' such as the 'Battle Symphony' and the works written for the Congress of Vienna. This trend was continued in the following years. 1816 at least brought two important compositions, the song cycle An die ferne Geliebte (op.98, April) and the Piano Sonata in A (op.101, November), but 1817 was completely barren in respect of completed major works. Instead, Beethoven during these years contented himself with elegant trivia, such as the polished march that he wrote in June 1816 for the Vienna artillery corps (woo24), as well as continuing to compose the instrumental and vocal settings of Scottish airs that he provided for George Thomson of Edinburgh (from the years 1809 to 1820 he worked intermittently on close to 200 such settings). He also refurbished some variations for piano trio that he had written many years earlier on a theme from one of Wenzel Müller's Singspiele, and he revised and to some extent rewrote an arrangement for string quintet made by someone else of his youthful C minor trio from op.1 (these were subsequently published as his op.121a and his op.104). And, even more significantly, he toiled hard on a number of new compositions without managing to complete them; they included a piano concerto in D, a piano trio in F minor, and a string quintet in D minor. Scores of these three works were in fact begun.

These were indeed unhappy years for Beethoven. He was now thoroughly out of sympathy with the kind of music being written and being applauded in Vienna. The aristocratic milieu that had welcomed and sheltered him in his earlier years in Vienna had been shattered by the military, political and financial upheavals of the Napoleonic wars, with the result that he had lost or broken with almost all his high-born friends apart from the Archduke Rudolph. In spite of his popular successes in 1813 and 1814, his general acceptance as the greatest living composer, and a resurgence of Viennese performances of his works from 1816 onwards (testifying to their growing status as part of the standard repertory), Beethoven found no wide public in Vienna that he could respect, and daydreams of journeys abroad – to England, even to Italy – filled his mind. Nor should it be supposed that the attachment to Antonie Brentano, though he had not seen her for some years, was forgotten. The best informant here is Fanny, one of Giannatasio's daughters, who observed Beethoven at this time with a sensitivity sharpened by her own unavowed devotion to him. In September 1816 she recorded in her diary a confession of Beethoven to her father that she had overheard. Five years before, he had wanted a more intimate union with a woman, but it was 'not to be thought of, almost impossible, a chimera. Nevertheless, it is now as on the first day, I have not been able to get it out of my mind'. Some months earlier, on 8 May 1816, Beethoven had ended a letter to Ries in London with the words: 'My best greetings to your wife. Unfortunately, I have no wife.

I found only one whom I shall doubtless never possess'. This nostalgic retrospection forms the background to the song cycle on the subject of the 'distant beloved' that he wrote in April 1816.

There were also difficulties of a more practical kind. Beethoven was consumed with misgivings as to his ability to look after his nephew and to run an orderly household. The year 1817, in particular, is marked by an immense number of letters to the kindly Nannette Streicher, a pianist and wife of the piano maker Johann Andreas Streicher, on the minutiae of domestic administration, the cost of household commodities, the employment of servants, and the like. Deeper doubts about the decisions that he was taking on Karl's behalf and about his treatment of Johanna were committed to his diary:

God, God, my refuge, my rock, my all. Thou seest my inmost heart and knowest how it pains me to be obliged to compel another to suffer by my good labours for my precious Karl!!! O hear me always, thou Ineffable One, hear me – thy unhappy, most unhappy of all mortals.

Further problems were created by his slowly but unmistakably deteriorating health and especially by one aspect of it, his deepening deafness. By 1818 he was virtually stone deaf, so conversation had to be carried on with pencil and paper. This was the start of the 'conversation books', nearly 140 of which have survived. In the main they are a record of only one side of each discussion; they show what Beethoven's friends and visitors wanted to say to him, but not his own observations, since those were normally spoken. Unfortunately Schindler, who took possession of the conversation books after Beethoven's death, saw fit not only to destroy some of them but to make false entries in the remainder, so that as documents they must be treated with some caution.

Beethoven's recovery from his compositional stagnation seems to have begun in the autumn of 1817. It was at first very slow. At that time he decided to accept an offer made earlier in the year by the Philharmonic Society of London. This invited him to write two grand symphonies for the Society, and to appear in person in London for the winter season of 1817–18. But he made no start on a symphony, or plans for a journey to London, afterwards explaining that his health had not allowed it. Instead, he set to work on a gigantic four-movement piano sonata in B, known today as the Hammerklavier Sonata (op.106). Its first two movements were probably ready by April 1818, and the remaining two were worked on during his summer stay at Mödling, the whole being completed by the autumn. Thus its composition, carried out (as he said) 'in distressful circumstances', had taken the best part of a year. Beethoven dedicated it to the Archduke Rudolph, for whom he was now planning a work on an even grander scale. For the archduke was being made the recipient of ecclesiastical honours. He was created a cardinal on 24 April 1819, and on 4 June he was appointed Archbishop of Olmütz (now Olomouc) in Moravia. 'The day', wrote Beethoven in offering his congratulations on the latter elevation, 'on which a High Mass composed by me will be performed during the ceremonies solemnized for Your Imperial Highness will be the most glorious day of my life', and it looks as though by then he had already been at work for some time on the composition now known as the Missa solemnis (op.123). Evidently the news that the archduke was to be elevated had been known to friends in advance.

Since the installation of the archbishop was set for 9 March 1820, some way ahead, Beethoven must have felt that he could afford to proceed at a measured pace. In the first half of 1819, he even interrupted work on the Mass to write down some 20 variations on a theme of Anton Diabelli's before tackling the Gloria and Credo. But he had not allowed for the time about to be lost in litigation in 1819 and the first months of 1820, or for the tendency of each section of the work to expand to a vast scale. Beethoven had to abandon any hope of the mass's being ready for the installation. But he persevered with it, making substantial progress in the summer and autumn of 1820. He even took on new commitments at this time, undertaking at the end of May 1820 to produce three piano sonatas within three months for the Berlin publisher Adolf Martin Schlesinger. Although nothing like that optimistic pace was achieved, the first sonata was apparently completed and a start made on the other two shortly after his return to Vienna from Mödling in the autumn of 1820. The sonata that was now ready was the one in E, published as op.109. But in 1821 illnesses both at the start of the year and in July – this time an attack of jaundice – as well as continued work on the mass resulted in the other two sonatas not coming near to completion until the end of the year. The autograph of the second, in A, is dated 25 December 1821, that of the third, in C minor, 13 January 1822; but revisions to both postponed their completion for a little longer. Unlike op.109, published in Berlin, the other two (opp.110 and 111) first appeared in Paris from the firm that Adolf Martin Schlesinger's son Maurice had started there.

9. 1822–4.

There was no longer any question of checks on Beethoven's creativity. 1822 saw not only the finishing touches on the two sonatas, the last he was to write, but the virtu al completion of the Mass by the autumn, and an almost

immediate start on another very large composition that he was impatient to get to grips with. This was the work now known as the Ninth Symphony. Before that he had also assembled a set of 11 bagatelles for the piano (op.119), five of which had been written by the beginning of 1821 for an instructional book of studies (most of the others were based on much earlier material); and he resumed work on the set of piano variations on Diabelli's theme that he had broken off in 1819. He found time, too, to compose a fine overture (op.124) and a chorus (woo98) for the opening of the new theatre in the Josefstadt on 3 October 1822. The overture, Die Weihe des Hauses ('The Consecration of the House'), takes its title from the inaugural drama at the theatre.

The piano variations need a word of explanation. In 1819 Diabelli, no doubt responding to post-Congress patriotic fervour and in search of attractive publishing material for the new firm of Cappi & Diabelli, conceived the idea of inviting a large number of eminent or popular composers from the Austrian states to submit a single variation on a simple theme of his own that he circulated; the intention was to make an album. Such an album was indeed published by Diabelli, though not until 1824, with variations from 50 composers including Schubert and the 11-year-old Liszt. But from the start Beethoven had decided to contribute not one variation but a set of them. In time these reached the number of 33, and Diabelli decided to publish Beethoven's variations (op.120) as a separate album; in fact it came out before the other one.

The nature of the symphony to which Beethoven now turned his attention can be understood as the coalescence of several diverse elements that had been stirring in his imagination, in some cases over many years. The notion of composing a vocal setting of Schiller's An die Freude ('Ode to Joy') goes back to his last days in Bonn, as a letter of January 1793, from the Bonn professor of jurisprudence Fischenich to Schiller's wife, makes clear: 'He proposes to compose Schiller's Freude, strophe by strophe. I expect something perfect, since he is wholly devoted to the great and sublime'. This was an intention to which he returned a number of times – in 1798 for instance, and in 1812, in connection with sketches for an overture that later became the Namensfeier. Another element was the desire to complete at least one symphony for the Philharmonic Society, and possibly the promised two. For a time it seems that he conceived of one of these symphonies as containing a choral section – a 'pious song in a symphony in the ancient modes' – and the other as being in D minor without any such special feature. Only in 1822 were these diverse concepts united in the plan for a D minor symphony with a setting of Schiller's Ode as its finale: this he now intended to conclude with Turkish music and a full choir.

1823 was the year in which the main work on the Ninth Symphony was done, though the last details were not completed until the following March. It was also a year of great concern with copyists and publishers. Beethoven made the mistake of offering manuscript copies of his mass on a subscription basis – at a price of 50 ducats – to the crowned heads of Europe; this involved him first in a tedious correspondence with the courts, and then in a no less irksome scrutiny of the handwritten scores (a task for which Schindler was put to use). The difficulties were increased by the illness and death on 6 August 1823 of Wenzel Schlemmer, who had been Beethoven's chief copyist for a quarter of a century and on whom he relied greatly. This year also saw the publication of the op.111 piano sonata and the Diabelli Variations. The mass formed the centre of an immensely complicated series of negotiations with publishers in Vienna and abroad, in which other works completed and uncompleted, such as the op.124 overture and the Ninth Symphony, also featured. It must be remembered that he regarded the mass as his greatest work, the result of some two years' labour and not lightly to be disposed of; if anything was outrageous it was not the size of the fee demanded but the fact that by the end no fewer than seven publishers had been involved. The final result was satisfactory: a firm that he could trust, Schott of Mainz, agreed to publish several of his important works, including the mass and the Ninth Symphony.

With the symphony completed Beethoven allowed himself some relaxation; according to Schindler, 'he could again be seen strolling through the streets, using his black-ribboned lorgnette to examine attractive window displays, and greeting many acquaintances or friends after his long seclusion'. But as he had long been unhappy with the Viennese reception of serious art, he was reluctant to risk a concert, and made an inquiry of Berlin whether a performance of the mass and the symphony might be given there. News of this fact became known in Vienna and led to a touching document being presented to him by a number of his friends and admirers. This was an eloquent declaration of their confidence in him, and a plea for him to allow his latest works to be heard in Vienna. Beethoven responded by agreeing to give a concert. It took place in the Kärntnertortheater on 7 May 1824 and consisted of the op.124 overture, the Kyrie, Credo and Agnus Dei from the mass, and the Ninth Symphony. The theatre was crowded and the reception enthusiastic. Many years later the pianist Thalberg, who was among those present, recalled that after the scherzo had ended Beethoven stood turning over the leaves of the score, quite unaware of the thunderous applause, until the contralto Caroline Unger pulled him by the sleeve and pointed to the audience behind him, to whom he then turned and bowed (Schindler and Mme Unger also remembered the moving incident, though they placed it at the end of the concert). A second performance of the symphony and the Kyrie of the mass (with some other pieces) 16 days later was much less successful.

Around the time of the symphony's first performance in May 1824, Beethoven turned once more to the piano and wrote a 'cycle of bagatelles'. Unlike the earlier ones he had written (opp.33, 119), the six bagatelles of op.126 were conceived not as separate pieces but as forming a set. At the end of the year he returned to a poem that he had come to value highly. This was Matthisson's Opferlied, which he seems to have regarded (in Nottebohm's phrase) as 'a prayer for all seasons'. He had set it in 1795 and again in 1822; now he produced his final version, a setting for soprano, chorus and orchestra (op.121b). In these years, when Beethoven was hoping that his smaller pieces at any rate would prove easy to sell, he was no doubt tempted to refurbish drafts of songs written many years earlier and to put them on the market. But with the Opferlied, as with the much better-known instance of Schiller's Ode to Joy, one may detect some elements of a desire in Beethoven around this time to gather up the unfinished business of the past and attend to ideas that had waited long for definitive expression. He was already beginning to suspect that not much time was left to him.

10. 1824–7.

It seems unlikely that anyone could have predicted that the remaining years of Beethoven's life would be devoted to works in a single medium – that of the string quartet. Since 1810 he had composed no quartets. In the miraculously fertile year of 1822, however, he had written to the publisher Peters on 5 June quoting his price (50 ducats) for a string quartet 'which you could have very soon'. A letter of a month later explained that the quartet was 'not yet quite finished, because something else intervened'. It is unlikely, however, that by then he had even started to work on the Quartet in E (op.127). The impetus to complete it and to compose others was provided by a commission from Prince Nikolay Golitsïn, a music lover and cellist of St Petersburg. In a letter of 9 November 1822 Golitsïn invited Beethoven to compose 'one, two or three new quartets' for whatever fee was thought proper; they were to be dedicated to the prince. In his reply of 25 January 1823 Beethoven accepted the invitation, fixing his honorarium at 50 ducats per quartet and promising to complete the first by the end of February or by the middle of March at latest. But he had not allowed for the claims of the mass and the symphony; not until after the concerts of May 1824 was the work resumed in earnest. The quartet was finished in February 1825, nearly two years after it had been promised, and was privately rehearsed before being sent to Golitsïn. In the meantime Golitsïn, who had been among the princely subscribers to the manuscript copies of the mass that Beethoven had advertised in 1823, gave the first performance of that work at St Petersburg on 7 April (26 March, Old Style) 1824 – a whole month before the partial performance in Vienna.

The E Quartet was performed by the Schuppanzigh Quartet on 6 March 1825, but did not please the Viennese audience. Later performances, however, in which Joseph Boehm led instead of Schuppanzigh, were well received. Beethoven at once turned his attention to the second quartet for Golitsïn, in A minor (op.132). Some progress had already been made when a sharp illness in April sent him to his bed. He was ill for about a month, but felt well enough by 7 May to move to Baden, and there the quartet was completed in July. Its slow movement contains allusions to his illness; the initial melody is inscribed 'Hymn of thanksgiving to the divinity, from a convalescent, in the Lydian mode', and the contrasting section in 3/8 time is entitled 'Feeling new strength'. This work received two private performances from the Schuppanzigh Quartet on 9 and 11 September 1825; among the audience was the publisher Maurice Schlesinger, who agreed to buy it, as well as another quartet not yet written, at the price of 80 ducats per quartet (the one in E had already gone to Schott). The first public performance of the A minor Quartet was on 6 November, again by the Schuppanzigh Quartet.

Without any break Beethoven started work on Golitsïn's third quartet, which occupied him from July to December 1825. The Schuppanzigh Quartet gave its première on 21 March 1826. This work, in B (op.130), consisted of six movements, the last of which, an immense fugue, proved something of a stumbling-block to players and listeners. No doubt this work too should have gone to Schlesinger to publish, but in the end Beethoven gave it to the Viennese firm of Matthias Artaria.

Beethoven had now fulfilled his commission, but Prince Golitsïn had paid only for the first of his three quartets; he still owed Beethoven 125 ducats – 50 ducats for each of the other two quartets, and 25 ducats for the dedication of the op.124 overture. Although the prince acknowledged the debt, and expressed himself immensely pleased with the quartets, he was financially embarrassed at the time, and his promise to pay was not carried out before Beethoven's death.

By the beginning of 1826, if not earlier, Beethoven was at work on a fourth quartet, in C minor (op.131). Just as in the previous year, while he had been engaged on the A minor quartet, so now illness once again interrupted him. As before it was abdominal pain, and seemingly pain in his joints; his eyes were also affected. But before the end of March he was better, and completed the quartet in all essentials by June. This quartet was plainly

intended for Maurice Schlesinger, to whom he had written on 22 April with a request for 80 ducats straight away, 'for quartets are now in demand everywhere, and it really seems that our age is taking a step forward'. But Schlesinger's Paris firm had been damaged by fire, and on getting no reply Beethoven impatiently offered the quartet to Schlesinger's father in Berlin, to Probst of Leipzig, and to Schott of Mainz, who secured the work.

To understand the events of the summer of 1826 it is necessary to go back some way and resume the story of the nephew at the point that it was broken off in 1820. After the guardianship issue had been resolved in Beethoven's favour in that year, Karl remained at Blöchlinger's educational institute until the summer of 1823. Having by then matriculated, he proceeded to the university and attended the philological lectures that were given there. He was just 17, and in spite of the earlier forebodings of Beethoven and Blöchlinger about his character and his industry, the almost complete segregation from his mother that he had to endure, and the conflicts of loyalty constantly imposed on him, he had developed well and had shown good progress in his studies. He was also making himself useful to his uncle, with whom he spent the summer of 1823 in Baden, acting as messenger and handyman, and sometimes as amanuensis and ready-reckoner. When Beethoven returned to Vienna for the winter Karl moved in with him, and remained until Easter 1825, when he left the university for the Polytechnic Institute and moved to lodgings run by a certain Matthias Schlemmer.

Whether they were living together or apart, it was not an easy relationship. From the conversation-book entries Karl appears as good-natured, lively and shrewd, but perhaps also a little sly and prone to tell tales; he must after all have been used to hearing people slandered recklessly, and he was eager to please his intimidating uncle. Beethoven's helplessness in practical matters, which included dealing with the servants, put a heavy load on Karl's time; but his possessiveness, suspiciousness and irritability must have been even more of a burden. Beethoven was jealous of Karl's young friends, and not only disparaged them but tried to prevent him from seeing them; at the same time, when he had moved for the summer to Baden, he expected Karl to come out to visit him on Sundays and holidays, thus greatly interfering with his nephew's studies.

In 1825 Beethoven himself acquired a friend nearer to Karl's age than to his own. This was Karl Holz, the second violin in the Schuppanzigh Quartet, who was then 27. Holz came to occupy something of the same place in his household that had previously been held by Schindler; Schindler was more or less completely displaced by Holz during 1825 and most of 1826, and never forgave him. The conversation-book entries suggest that Beethoven began to use Holz to spy on Karl.

The letters of Beethoven to Karl in the years 1825 and 1826 are full of reproaches and recriminations, and demands for his affection and attention. There are also violently emotional attempts at reconciliation. The conversation books tell the same story: Beethoven was ceaselessly suspicious of the friends Karl had, the use he made of his spare time, the way he spent his money, and made him accountable for all three. By the summer of 1826, at least, Karl seems to have grown more contemptuous of his uncle, and started seeing his mother clandestinely, as well as one of his 'forbidden' friends, Niemetz. It may be that this produced conflicts in him that he could not handle; there are suggestions too that he had also got into debt. On 5 August, at all events, he pawned his watch, bought two new pistols and drove to Baden. Next morning he went to the Helenenthal, one of his uncle's favourite spots, and discharged both weapons at his temple. Neither bullet penetrated the skull, and when the injured young man was found he was carried back to Vienna – to his mother's house.

Karl's attempted suicide proved shattering to Beethoven; Schindler describes him soon after as looking like a man of 70. He was urged by his friends to give up the guardianship and to reach a decision about Karl's future, for the penal aspects of the case were a constant threat. Two years earlier Karl had expressed a wish to enter the army, and now, through the help of Stephan von Breuning, it was arranged for him to be taken as a cadet into the regiment of a certain Baron von Stutterheim. Beethoven's gratitude for this outcome is shown by the fact that he changed the dedication of his C minor Quartet, which he had declared to be his greatest, so that it could be dedicated to this unmusical warrior.

Since 1819 Beethoven's brother Johann had owned a country property at Gneixendorf near Krems. Beethoven had often been asked to stay, but his dislike of his sister-in-law Therese had led him to turn the invitations down; shocked by her infidelities, in fact, he had from time to time urged Johann to divorce her and to make a will leaving his fortune to Karl. On this occasion, judging it prudent to be absent from Vienna, he accepted Johann's invitation; and three days after Karl had been discharged from hospital on 25 September the two brothers travelled to Gneixendorf with their nephew, arriving after an overnight stop at a village. Beethoven was ill when he left Vienna; he seems also to have been very depressed and withdrawn, and his eccentricities of behaviour were found comic by the country folk. Yet as usual he managed to work. Since July he had been occupied with a quartet in F (op.135); he completed it at Gneixendorf by the middle of October, copied out the parts himself, and

sent it straight away to Schlesinger in Paris. Then he turned to a problem that had arisen with the B Quartet (op.130). Because of the difficulty that had been found with the fugue that formed its last movement, he was asked by the publisher to supply a new, easier finale (which would be paid for). After reflection he undertook to do so, and delivered it to the publisher in the middle of November. It was the last complete piece that he composed. The 'Grosse Fuge', it was agreed, should be published as well, but as a separate opus (op.133).

Beethoven started back to Vienna with Karl on 1 December, arriving there the next day, and having got to his lodgings in the building known as the Schwarzspanierhaus he immediately called a doctor. He had already had swollen feet in the country, but the underlying pathology became manifest on 13 December when he developed jaundice and ascites (dropsy). His doctors appear to have perceived correctly that his liver was affected (the autopsy indicates cirrhosis of the liver caused either by hepatitis or alcohol and related multiple organ failure), but there was little they could do beyond relieving his swollen abdomen by tapping off the fluid. This was done on 20 December, and again on 8 January, 2 February and 27 February 1827. Meanwhile news of the seriousness of his condition, and exaggerated reports about his financial needs, had spread far and wide. The firm of Schott sent him a dozen bottles of Rhine wine; the Philharmonic Society of London resolved to provide £100 for his relief. There were occasional letters from Karl, now with his regiment, and some entertainment for the sick man was provided by Breuning's 13-year-old son Gerhard, who called daily. There was also a stream of other visitors.

When it was clear that the end was near Breuning drafted a simple will, which bequeathed Beethoven's whole estate to Karl; on 23 March Beethoven copied and signed it ('luwig van Beethoven') with great difficulty. He died at about 5.45 p.m. on 26 March. The funeral on 29 March was a public event for the Viennese; the crowd was estimated at 10,000 (fig.10). The funeral oration, written by Franz Grillparzer, was delivered at the graveside in the cemetery at Währing by the actor Heinrich Anschütz. In 1888 Beethoven's remains were removed, together with Schubert's, to the Zentralfriedhof (Central Cemetery) in Vienna, where they now rest side by side.

11. The 'three periods'.

The division of Beethoven's life and works into three periods was proposed as early as 1828 by Schlosser, taken up by Fétis in 1837, and then elaborated and popularized by Lenz in his influential Beethoven et ses trois styles of 1852. Though each of these critics grouped Beethoven's works differently, the three-period schema took hold and settled into something like a concensus: a first formative period ending around 1802, a second period lasting until around 1812 and a third period from 1813 to 1827. This schema has been attacked, not without reason, as simplistic and suspiciously consonant with evolutionary preconceptions (some of which are discussed below in §19). Yet it refuses to die, because in spite of all it obviously does accommodate the bluntest style distinctions to be observed in Beethoven's output, and also because the breaks between the periods correspond with the major turning-points in Beethoven's biography. There can be no doubt that with Beethoven – not to speak of other composers – a very close relationship existed between his creative energies and his emotional life.

The three-period framework should not be scrapped, then, but it is certainly in need of some refining. The following takes account of a number of suggestions made in the more recent literature. First, a fourth period should be added, or rather, divided off from the traditional first period: the music composed at Bonn, about which the 19th century knew little and probably cared less. Second, examination shows that each of the four periods breaks naturally into two sub-periods, and so they are best conceived of in this way. Third, allowance must be made not only for the general development of a composer's style, but also for the inner necessities of certain genres and the effects of his experience with them. For example, works in genres which he was attacking for the first time may have less 'advanced' stylistic features than works of the same date in familiar, much used genres.

It is also necessary to understand that in each of the four periods the nature of the two sub-periods and their relation to each other differ considerably. In the Bonn period the first sub-period (1782–5) contains juvenilia of small importance. Then there seems to be a pause; it is known that the years 1786–9 were very eventful ones for Beethoven but little is known of any music he composed in this period. From 1790–92 a group of much more mature works survives – a rather impressive corpus, indeed, which could reasonably support the young composer's ambitious plan of study in Vienna.

In the early Vienna period, Beethoven first had to gain control over the Viennese style and assert his individuality within it (1793–9). Then from 1800 to 1802 he produced at high speed a series of increasingly experimental pieces which must be seen in retrospect as a transition to the middle period. It is in this sub-period

that the relative effects of genre and familiarity are especially clear. In 1798 and 1799 the piano sonatas are fluid and visionary but the earliest string quartets are relatively stiff. By 1800 the quartet writing moves more easily but the first of his symphonies is still decidedly conservative.

The middle period begins with a famous series of compositions in the heroic vein (1803–8): the 'Eroica' Symphony, Leonore (Fidelio) and others. The music of the sub-period 1809–12 follows the same general stylistic impetus, but becomes rather less radical and turbulent as it becomes more and more effortless in technique. Most of Beethoven's orchestral music dates from the middle period.

The late period is in every way the most complex. In 1813–18, years marked by emotional upheavals, Beethoven's output fell off sharply. Naturally enough, most attention has been directed to the few compositions in this sub-period of a more serious nature; increasingly intimate and even 'private', they convey unmistakable hints of a new style. But the years 1813–16 also saw many 'public' works, such as the 'Battle Symphony', Der glorreiche Augenblick and the Chor auf die verbündeten Fürsten for the Congress of Vienna. These, as Maynard Solomon has observed, 'regressed to a pastiche of the heroic style' and show just as unmistakably that the style change was now being worked out slowly and with great difficulty – not at all like the earlier transition in 1800–02. The Hammerklavier Sonata of 1818 represented a kind of breakthrough, but only after the matter of his nephew's guardianship was settled by the courts did Beethoven's compositional energies flow easily again, in the unbroken series of late-period masterpieces written from 1820 to 1826.

12. Music of the Bonn period.

Ten compositions by Beethoven are known from the years 1782–5, when efforts were being made to promote him as a prodigy. Publication was gained for most of these works. Another 30 or so from the years 1787–92 are extant; of these, few appear to pre-date 1790 and only one was published at the time. As a good many of the others are known only from later sources, scholars have always suspected that they may be known in considerably revised versions. It was a pet theory of Thayer, the great 19th-century Beethoven biographer, that the young composer brought a thick portfolio of music from Bonn to Vienna and drew on it liberally for compositions of the next decade and even later. Rather more than most composers, as Thayer had observed, Beethoven was inclined to publish his juvenilia in later life and also to incorporate parts of them into mature pieces. And this in turn suggests a special motive for studying the unassuming music of Beethoven's Bonn years.

The most substantial of the earliest compositions are sets of three piano sonatas and three piano quartets. The main musical influences on the boy have been seen as, first, Neefe and Sterkel, and then Mozart; each of the piano quartets is modelled on a specific work by Mozart, from the set of violin sonatas published in 1781 (k379/373a, 380/374f, 296). Beethoven looked to Mozart again and again during his first decade in Vienna (see opp.3, 16, 18 no.5).

During the second Bonn sub-period Beethoven produced about a dozen lieder of considerable interest. He published some of them later in op.52 (1805), but only the simpler ones; the more elaborate and intense Bonn songs are not well known because they were discovered relatively late and buried in the 1888 supplement to the Gesamtausgabe. In 1790, the important commission to prepare official cantatas on the death of Emperor Joseph II and the accession of Leopold II spurred Beethoven on to the most ambitious of his youthful projects. The funeral cantata gave him the opportunity for some admirably expressive writing in the pathetic C minor chorus which frames the work and in the serene soprano aria with chorus. He was to use this again with superb effect at the dénouement of Leonore, 15 years later. In addition to the five large arias within these cantatas, he also composed three accomplished concert arias: Prüfung des Küssens, Mit Mädeln sich vertragen (his first Goethe setting) and Primo amore.

A genre in which any budding virtuoso had to excel was the variation set. In 1790–92 Beethoven wrote out two brilliant sets for piano, on Righini's 'Venni amore' and Dittersdorf's 'Es war einmal ein alter Mann'; one set for piano duet on a theme by Count Waldstein; and one for violin and piano on Mozart's 'Se vuol ballare' (completed in Vienna). While many of the variations are of the insipid decorative variety, others deal with the theme in a more interesting, substantive fashion. It is in these 'analytical' variations, perhaps, more than in the other Bonn music, that the Beethoven to come can be glimpsed.

Less impressive, in these years, is the instrumental music in the sonata style. There is an incomplete draft for a passionate symphony movement in C minor; fragments of a big violin concerto and of some sort of concertante for piano, flute and bassoon; a complete trio for the same three instruments; a piano trio (woo38) and what looks like part of a movement from another, and a few rather colourless sonata movements for piano. There are also

many sketches. (Is it accidental that so much of this music has been transmitted in an incomplete form? An oboe concerto and the original version of the B Piano Concerto, both dating from this period, have vanished with barely a trace.) Where Beethoven departed from formula in these works he seems to have straggled helplessly, as in the violin concerto fragment. Although there are some bold strokes, they are seldom integrated convincingly into the total musical discourse.

Greater sophistication is shown by the Wind Octet op.103, but here there is reason to believe that Beethoven rewrote what was originally a Bonn score during his first years in Vienna, with an eye to publication. Leaving this work out of consideration, one is bound to conclude that Beethoven at Bonn was a less interesting composer of works in the sonata style than of music in other genres – variations, lieder and large vocal-orchestral pieces. In view of his later output, this conclusion may seem surprising. Yet the sonata style as it is generally known was very much a Viennese speciality. The Bonn works in the sonata style make clear how important and right it was for Beethoven to have gone back to Vienna in late 1792, and how large a part Vienna was to play in the formation and nurture of his musical personality.

13. Music of the early Vienna period.

During his first year or so in Vienna Beethoven appears to have composed considerably less than in the years just preceding and following. There are signs that he spent some time revising or recasting an amount of his Bonn music to reflect Viennese standards and taste. The Wind Octet has already been mentioned; sketches show that he also started reworking his violin and oboe concertos. Fragments of the juvenile piano quartets were incorporated into some of the first sonatas composed in Vienna, op.2 nos.1 and 3.

By the time opp.1 and 2 were published (July 1795, March 1796) Beethoven certainly had the musical wherewithal to make Vienna sit up and listen. Probably the best-known movement from this impressive group of six pieces is the opening Allegro of the Piano Sonata in F minor op.2 no.1, a remarkable precursor of Beethovenian concentration and intensity (and the more remarkable in that the sketches go back to Bonn). In 1795, however, this movement was an exception. Most of the early music is scaled very broadly, weighty and discursive, even overblown. Thus for many years Beethoven most often wrote sonatas in four movements, rather than three, as was common with Haydn and Mozart, and it seems indicative that his op.3 was a string trio in six movements, modelled on the large Divertimento k563 by Mozart. There is inconclusive evidence that op.3 goes back to a Bonn original, but in its final form it was certainly written in Vienna, like the Wind Octet.

Opp.1 and 2 provide examples of the rather ponderous slow movements characteristic of the first Vienna period, and also of that famous innovation the scherzo. Beethoven's early scherzos move no faster than most Haydn minuets and sound no more humorous, but they last considerably longer and tend to be constructed out of more symmetrical periods. As for movements in sonata form, most of them contain a great deal of musical material – and a great many modulations in the second group. Though Beethoven's still emerging powers of organization were sometimes overtaxed, sometimes they were not and there are passages of authentic Beethovenian power, especially in the matter of long-range control over bold harmonic action. Cases in point are the passing modulations in the first movement of the A major Sonata op.2 no.2, and the expanded recapitulation in the Adagio of the G major Trio op.1 no.2.

In these early years Beethoven made his name as a pianist and improviser and as a composer primarily for piano. Some ideas of his improvising style can be formed from his published piano variations, from copious notations on his early sketchleaves, and from certain incomplete piano scores which are perhaps better viewed as aides-mémoires than as unachieved compositions. The well-known Rondo a capriccio was completed probably by Diabelli after Beethoven's death and published as op.129 under the irresponsible title 'Rage over a Lost Penny', and an interesting cyclic 'Fantasia' in three movements has come to light in the so-called 'Kafka sketchbook' (British Library). In later years he improvised less, of course, but evidence of his improvising style is still to be found in the Fantasias opp.77 and 80, the cadenzas to piano concertos, and shorter cadenza-like passages in a very large number of other pieces.

Beethoven was naturally open to the influence of other pianist-composers at a time when the technique of the instrument was expanding significantly. Too much can be made, however, of similar themes and pianistic textures in Beethoven and Clementi, Dussek and other such composers. From the start, and even at his most discursive, Beethoven had a commitment to the total structure that makes Clementi seem very lax. His well-known insistence on making transitional and cadential matter sound individual is already in evidence; he had little use for the debased coin of the style galant which was still in circulation in the 1790s. And in his 'serious' compositions piano virtuosity is always used in the service of a musical idea, never for its own sake. These

compositions may sound pompous or gauche, sometimes, but they never sound meretricious and they never lack a certain intellectual and imaginative quality.

As has been mentioned above, when Haydn heard the op.1 trios he praised them but thought the public would not understand or accept the third, in C minor. One suspects that Haydn himself may have been put off by the extremes of tempo, dynamics, texture and local chromatic action in this piece, and still more by the resulting emotional aura. He would not have been the last listener to find something callow and stagey, which is to say essentially impersonal, in these insistent gestures of pathos and high drama. Beethoven of course paid no attention to his advice and published increasingly sophisticated C minor items in nearly every one of his composite sets of works over the next eight years (opp.9, 10, 18, 30). In these years C minor was practically the only minor key he used for full-length pieces (though D minor is used for the impressive slow movements of op.10 no.3 and op.18 no.1, as well as for the 'Tempest' Sonata op.31 no.2). The most successful early embodiments of Beethoven's 'C minor mood' are no doubt the Sonate pathétique op.13 (1797–8) and the Third Piano Concerto (?1800–03). Still to come were the 32 Variations on an Original Theme, for piano, the Coriolan Overture, the Fifth Symphony and the last piano sonata.

The first movements, in sonata form, of the C minor Trio and the F minor Sonata have quiet main themes which are designed to return fortissimo at the point of recapitulation. This is a characteristic Beethoven fingerprint. In the early works it often makes for a rather blustery effect. Yet it adumbrates a new view of the form whereby the recapitulation is conceived less as a symmetrical return or a climax than as a transformation or triumph. The sonata style is always inherently 'dramatic', in the special sense expounded and illuminated by Tovey. Tovey also pointed out that at their most characteristic Haydn and Mozart use the style to project high comedy, the musical equivalent of a comedy of manners. Beethoven was already groping for ways of using it for tragedy, melodrama or his own special brand of inspirational theatre of ideas.

This radical approach to sonata form (which encompasses all its aspects, of course, not only the enhanced recapitulation) becomes clearer in the piano sonatas of 1796–9: op.7, op.10 nos.1–3 and op.13. In op.13 and in the fine Sonata in D op.10 no.3, although the main theme does not return loudly, there is still a compelling impression that something urgent is at stake in the musical dialectic. Broadly speaking, it was this sense of urgency in dealing with what became known as the Classical style that Viennese aristocratic circles found most novel and impressive in the 'grand Mogul', as Haydn called him, from the provinces.

A deliberate campaign to annex all current musical genres can be read into Beethoven's activities in these years. He wrote an effective concert aria – a scena and rondò – to a text adapted from Metastasio, Ah! perfido, some deft little songs to lyrics by Goethe, and an interesting extended lied, the once-popular Adelaide. He produced two rather Mozartian piano concertos, one of them (the B, op.19) evidently revised several times from a Bonn original, and a good deal of miscellaneous wind music, including a Quintet for Piano and Wind op.16 which incautiously invites comparison with a similar work by Mozart (k452). In 1795–6 he sketched long and hard at a symphony in C. As it was turning out to be too big, he wisely shelved it, though he returned to some of its musical ideas when he wrote the First Symphony (also in C) in 1799–1800.

The three Violin Sonatas op.12 are not as impressive as the contemporary piano sonatas; the two Cello Sonatas op.5 are also lesser works but interesting in their bold virtuoso stance, looking ahead to the Kreutzer Sonata of 1802–3. After completing the three String Trios op.9 Beethoven launched into his most ambitious project yet, the set of six String Quartets op.18 (1798–1800). All the while he was contributing copiously to the ephemera of Viennese musical life: easy piano variations, ballroom dances by the dozen, patriotic marching songs, arias to be inserted into a Singspiel, pieces for mechanical clock-organ and a Sonatina for mandolin and piano.

There is no single work that demarcates the second sub-period within the early Vienna years, the time when Beethoven began to show signs of dissatisfaction with some of the more formal aspects of the Classical style and reached towards something new. In a way the signs were present from the beginning. Novelties of conception can be detected all along. They are multiplied in the Sonate pathétique of 1798 – the integration of the introduction into the first movement proper, the perfectly managed bold modulations in the second group, the prophetic breakdown on the dominant in the middle of the rondo; not to speak of the overall coherence of mood which has made the Pathétique the most famous piece in Beethoven's early output. Another famous early piece, the first movement of the Quartet in F op.18 no.1, is his first exhaustive study in motivic saturation. The turn-motif of bars 1–2 forces its way into every available nook and cranny of the second group, the transitions, the development and coda. (When Beethoven revised op.18 no.1, after having given a fair copy of it to Amenda, he reduced the appearances of the turn-motif by nearly a quarter.)

The last two quartets of op.18, composed around 1800, show a rather new treatment of the traditional four-movement form (one that had recently been essayed by Haydn in several of his op.76 quartets). The first movements are not extensive and decisive but instead swift, bland and symmetrical, so that the later movements all seem (and were surely meant to seem) weightier or more arresting. The most visionary of these later movements is the composite finale of the Quartet in B flat op.18 no.6, where a slow, strange-sounding chromatic labyrinth entitled 'La malinconia' alternates with a swift, limpid little dance evocative of the Viennese ballrooms.

More far-reaching experiments with the weight, character and balance of the various movements in a work were made within the impressive series of about a dozen piano sonatas composed in 1800–02. These included op.26 in A flat with its 'Marcia funebre sulla morte d'un Eroe' (cf the 'Eroica' Symphony), op.27 no.1 in E flat, op.27 no.2 in C sharp minor (each marked 'quasi una fantasia') and op.31 no.3 in E flat. Some of the movements are run together, and there is a significant shift in weight away from the first movement and towards the last. Experiments of this kind with multi-movement works slowed down during the next period, when under the sway of his developing 'symphonic' ideal Beethoven found fresh resources in the traditional four-movement dynamic. But they played an important part in the growing flexibility of his art, and after 1812 they were resumed with much greater force and consciousness.

Greater flexibility already allowed for the incorporation of movements of widely different characters and forms. It is perhaps at this time that one first begins to be aware of the striking individuality of all Beethoven's pieces, a characteristic that has often been noted. Prime examples are the so-called 'Pastoral' Sonata in D op.28 (also the locus classicus for successive thematic fragmentation in a development section), the Sonata in Eflat op.31 no.3, and those great and deserving favourites of the Romantic era, the Pathétique, the 'Moonlight' and the D minor op.31 no.2.

The opening reverie of the 'Moonlight' is such a startling conception, even today, that Beethoven's very careful plotting of the sequence of the movements in this sonata seems to pale by comparison. Unprecedented for a sonata opening is the half-improvisatory texture, the unity of mood, and especially the mood itself – that romantic mestizia which will have overwhelmed all but the stoniest of listeners by the end of the melody's first phrase. An equally bold and emotional, but also more intellectual, experiment marks the opening of op.31 no.2. Here the first theme in a sonata form movement consists of antecedent and consequent phrases of radically different characters: a slow improvisatory arpeggio and a fast, highly motivic agitato. Both of these ideas can be heard echoing in the later movements of the sonata.

The inner pressure of his developing musical thought drove Beethoven on to more and more novelty, no doubt; and mixed in with this was a measure of artistic vanity. About 1801–2 he appeared much concerned with being original, even advising a publisher to point out the innovations in his Piano Variations on Original Themes opp.34 and 35 by means of a special advertisement. And that would certainly have been justified. Op.34 has its six variations in six different keys. Op.35 abstracts the ludicrous bare bass line of the contredanse theme from Prometheus and builds up from it fantastically in 15 variations and a full-length fugue. The finale of the 'Eroica' is a second building exercise on the same bass, this time involving variations in different keys and two fugato sections.

According to Czerny, his young pupil in those years, Beethoven spoke of a 'new path' he was following, a path which later Czerny associated with the important op.31 sonatas of 1802. Mention has already been made of op.31 no.2. Another novelty of conception was the key plan of the first movement of the Sonata in G op.31 no.1, which has the second group not in the dominant but in the mediant key (major and minor; cf the String Quintet op.29 of 1801). This looks ahead to Beethoven's thorough exploration and extension of the tonal range of Classical music, a process that was to run parallel with his expansion of all aspects of Classical form in the next years. In the late period it is the exception rather than the rule to have the second group in the dominant.

Other important, but more conservative, works of 1799–1801 are the music for the ballet Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus, Beethoven's introduction to the Viennese stage; the amiable but rather mindless Septet, whose great popularity soon came to irritate the composer; and the slender First Symphony, which can seem almost to wilt when commentators examine it for clues to future symphonic greatness. The Second Symphony of 1802 must also be counted among the more conservative works – this in spite of its great advance in assurance over the First and its inspired play with the notes F sharp and G as a means of unifying the whole. Although one would not easily mistake this for a work by Haydn, the Second Symphony stands as a final realization of the concept of a large concert piece which he had developed. This impression is confirmed by Beethoven's quotation of a sensational modulatory passage from The Creation, as Tovey observed.

One feels that in the Second Symphony Beethoven for the first time really engaged with the symphony orchestra and began to understand how it could serve his own emerging purpose. He had taken its true measure. In the middle period, from 1803 to 1812, he wrote most of his famous works for orchestra, evolving through them a new 'symphonic ideal' that also inspired most of his non-orchestral music.

14. The symphonic ideal.

After the period of inner turmoil expressed (and perhaps resolved) by the Heiligenstadt Testament of October 1802, Beethoven began to engage seriously with large public works involving explicitly extra-musical ideas. It was the first time he had done so since going to Vienna. An outer impetus was his association first with the Burgtheater and then with the Theater an der Wien, but the decision to embark on a 'Bonaparte symphony' at just this time came from inner pressures. The oratorio Christus am Oelberge, musically not a great success, was written hastily in early 1803. The opera Leonore was written very slowly in 1804–5. Between them came the 'Eroica' Symphony, no.3: an authentic 'watershed work', one that marks a turning-point in the history of modern music.

Thanks to Nottebohm's monograph on the 'Eroica' sketches, more is generally known about the composition of this work than any other by Beethoven. The sketches show a minimum of false starts and detours. The most radical ideas were present from the start, if in cruder form, and work seems to have proceeded with great assurance. This is striking indeed, for however carefully one studies Beethoven's evolving style up to 1803, nothing prepares one for the scope, the almost bewildering originality and almost continuous technical certainty manifested in this symphony. In sheer length, Beethoven may well have felt that he had overextended himself, for it was many years before he wrote another instrumental work of like dimensions.

In the first movement, one must marvel at the expansion in dimensions on every level; at the projection of certain melodic details of the main theme into the total form – the bass C sharp (D flat) instigating moves to the keys of the supertonic and the flat seventh degree in the recapitulation, the violins' G–A flat returning vertically as the famous horn-call dissonance; at the masterly coagulation of diverse material into the second group; and at the whole concept of the panoramic development section, with its passage of deepening breakdown redeemed by the introduction of a new theme (if it is indeed really new). The moving thematic 'liquidation' at the end of the Marcia funebre, the four alla breve bars in the da capo of the scherzo, the novel structure of the finale, the powerful fugatos throughout – none of these could have been predicted. Also astonishing is the quality of 'potential' that informs the main themes of the three fast movements. Two of them require (and in due course receive) horizontal or vertical completion, and the other is presented in a state of almost palpable evolution.

These themes were made to order for the new 'symphonic ideal' which Beethoven perfected at a stroke with his Third Symphony and further celebrated with his Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Ninth. The forcefulness, expanded range and evident radical intent of these works sets them apart from symphonies in the 18th-century tradition, such as Beethoven's own First and Second. But more than this, they all contrive to create the impression of a psychological journey or growth process. In the course of this, something seems to arrive or triumph or transcend – even if, as in the Pastoral, what is mainly transcended is the weather. This illusion is helped by certain other characteristic features: 'evolving' themes, transitions between widely separated passages, actual thematic recurrences from one movement to another, and last but not least, the involvement of extra-musical ideas by means of a literary text, a programme, or (as in the 'Eroica') just a few tantalizing titles.

In technical terms, this development may be viewed as the projection of the underlying principles of the sonata style on the scale of the total four-movement work, rather than that of the single movement in sonata form. This view takes account of the impression Beethoven now so often gives of grappling with musical fundamentals. He had the power – and it must be called an intellectual power – of penetration into the gestural level below sonata form. He could manipulate the basic elements of the sonata style in a more comprehensive, less formalistic way than ever before. One senses the same grasp of essences when Beethoven now isolates a melodic, harmonic or rhythmic detail of a theme and then appears to 'compose it out' – to spell out its implications later in the piece. Doubtless this also happens in earlier music, by Beethoven or by other composers, but in the middle period he began to draw attention to the process in a much more pointed fashion.

Beethoven's fascination for musicians of a certain turn of mind rests on his continuing investigation of basic musical relationships in this sense. The investigations grew more momentous in the late period, and also more subtle and pervasive, as will be seen if one compares the 'composing out' of C sharp and A flat in the 'Eroica'

first movement, mentioned above, with the treatment of the Neapolitan D in the Quartet in C sharp minor op.131.

For musicians and listeners of another turn of mind, Beethoven's attraction rests on another aspect of the 'symphonic ideal', one that is less technical but probably no less essential. The combination of his musical dynamic, now extremely powerful, and extra-musical suggestions invests his pieces with an unmistakable ethical aura. Even Tovey, the most zealous adherent of the 'pure music' position, was convinced that Beethoven's music was 'edifying'. J.W.N. Sullivan taught the readers of his influential little book to share in Beethoven's 'spiritual development'. Concert-goers of the 19th and 20th centuries gladly attached programmatic suggestions to those symphonies that lack them: to the Fifth, Beethoven's alleged remark about fate knocking at the door, and to the Seventh, Wagner's less happy evocation of an apotheosis of dance. In 1937 the eccentric musicologist Arnold Schering proposed detailed Shakespearean and other literary programmes for a whole clutch of Beethoven compositions.

An important influence on the 'Eroica' Symphony and other works of this period is that of French post-revolutionary music. In 1802 and 1803 operas by Cherubini and Méhul enjoyed enormous success in Vienna. Their impact on Beethoven has been traced in such diverse areas as his driving orchestral tutti style, his partiality for marches and march-like material, the free form of his overtures (Leonore no.2, 1805, stands in the same relation to Prometheus, 1801, as the 'Eroica' Symphony does to the First), and various points of harmony and orchestration. Beethoven's symphonic ideal itself is foreshadowed in the French repertory of the 1790s, in the grand revolutionary symphonies, sometimes with chorus, by Gossec, Méhul and their contemporaries. But with Beethoven there is not only an incomparably more arresting musical technique but also a decisive change in emphasis. He personalized the political symphony. The 'Eroica' was conceived as a tribute not to the idea of revolution but to the revolutionary hero, Napoleon, and really to Beethoven himself. Later concert-goers have been able to respond to Beethoven's heroic quests and spiritual journeys in a way they could never respond to celebrations of long-past political ideologies.

The conception of this symphonic ideal, and the development of technical means to implement it, is probably Beethoven's greatest single achievement. It is par excellence a Romantic phenomenon, however 'Classical' one may wish to regard his purely musical procedures. It is also a feature that has offended certain critics, especially in the early part of the 20th century, and set them against Beethoven. The composer himself was capable of producing a cynical and enormously popular travesty of his own symphonic ideal, in the 'Battle Symphony' of 1813.

15. Middle-period works.

Soon after the 'Eroica' Symphony the Fifth Symphony was conceived, but somehow work got deflected into certain other C major and minor projects, and things did not come together until late 1807 and 1808. More than any other piece of music, the Fifth Symphony has come to typify the thematic unification, or 'organicism', as the 19th century viewed it, that Beethoven developed to such a high degree in these years. The famous opening motif is to be heard in almost every bar of the first movement – and, allowing for modifications, in the other movements. The opening theme expands into the horn-call before the second subject, and the second subject employs the same note pattern as the horn-call. Then, in the development section, the horn-call is fragmented successively down to a single minim, alternating between strings and woodwind in a passage of extraordinary tension achieved primarily by harmonic means. As in many other works of the time, the last two movements are run together without a break; this device, obviously, contributes to the continuity and to a feeling of necessary sequence. But more than this: here the long transition passage between the movements, and the recurrence of a theme from the third movement in the retransition before the recapitulation of the fourth, give the sense that one movement is triumphantly resolved by the other – a sense confirmed by the enormously emphatic last-movement coda.

Such codas now become very common. They tend to assume the important function of finally resolving some melodic, harmonic or rhythmic instability in the first theme – an instability that has infused the movement with much of its energy up to the coda. This new weighting of sonata form towards the coda is associated, and sometimes coordinated, with another tendency, that of withholding full rhythmic or even harmonic resolution at the moment of recapitulation. Thus in the first movement of the Fourth Symphony, as Robert Simpson has observed, solid dominant–tonic resolution waits in the recapitulation until the appearance of the second theme (compare the first movements of two other works in the same key, B flat, the Hammerklavier Sonata and the Quartet op.130). The Fourth Symphony, said Tovey, 'is perhaps the work in which Beethoven first fully reveals his mastery of movement'.

Hardly less original than the Fifth Symphony is the Sixth ('Pastoral', 1808), though here for once the first movement is made as quiet as possible. This is done with the help of a development section devoid of tensions, a recapitulation approached hymn-like from the subdominant, and countless pedal points throughout. In compensation, a passage of fury comes elsewhere in the piece, as an extra movement (trombones and piccolo enter for the first time in the symphony to enforce this 'Storm'). Each of the five movements bears a programmatic inscription, and one of these is frankly pictorial in nature – the 'Scene by the brook' inscribed over the slow movement, which includes a series of stylized birdcalls at the end, in a sort of woodwind cadenza (Beethoven was careful to identify the quail, nightingale and cuckoo – see fig.12). On the other hand, he stressed the word 'Gefühle' ('feeling') in two other inscriptions and so could quite properly observe that his reference was less to musical 'Malerei' ('painting') than to emotions aroused by the countryside. A sequence of such feelings guides the listener through the familiar therapeutic progress of a Beethoven symphony, in a somewhat gentler version.

The symphonic ideal inspires most of the non-symphonic pieces written between 1803 and 1808. That is true to an extent even of the Kreutzer Sonata, composed in early 1803, just before the 'Eroica'. The Waldstein Sonata, composed just after the 'Eroica', adopts an idea for the groundplan of its opening paragraph from an earlier piano sonata, op.31 no.1 in G. But there is all the difference in ambition, scale and mood; what served in the earlier piece as a witty constructive device becomes in the later one an earth-shaking, or at least a piano-shaking, declaration. The slow movement was originally going to be the somewhat bovine piece now known as the 'Andante favori' (compare the Kreutzer and op.31 no.1). When Beethoven replaced this by the adagio 'Introduzione' which makes momentous preparations for the finale, he gave the sonata the characteristic 'symphonic' sweep even while shortening it, and also motivated (or validated) the grandiose coda of the finale. Planned on broader lines still, the 'Appassionata' Sonata (1804–5) is an even more imaginative work, a work of the greatest extremes – as witness the fortissimo chord handfuls that shatter the brooding quiet of the very first page.

This and other equally violent effects were hardly thinkable on the Walter fortepiano owned by Beethoven before 1803, when he got his Erard (now in the Vienna Kunsthistorisches Museum). Yet even when dealing with instruments that were not in a state of radical development, he acted as if they were. The string quartets of op.59 so strained the medium, as it was understood in 1806, that they met with resistance from players and audiences alike. The first movement of the F major Quartet op.59 no.1, though in mood very different from the 'Eroica' Symphony, resembles it in its unexampled scope and also, rather surprisingly, in a number of technical features. The second movement is Beethoven's largest, most fantastic scherzando – not a true scherzo, but a free essay in the tradition of the sonatas op.31 no.3 and op.54. All three quartet slow movements, surely, cry out for evocative titles, and the last two finales are all but orchestral in conception.

Each quartet was supposed to include a Russian melody, for the benefit of the dedicatee Count Rasumovsky, the Russian ambassador to Vienna. Here for the first time may be seen Beethoven's interest in folksong, which was to grow in later years. Folksongs did not much help the first two quartets, but Rasumovsky's notion came to superb fruition in the third, where Beethoven gave up the idea of incorporating pre-existing tunes and instead wrote the haunting A minor Andante in what he must have conceived to be a Russian idiom.

In some ways the 1805 Leonore stands apart from other major works of these years. In local musical terms, the innovations and expanded horizons of the instrumental works are not deeply reflected in the separate operatic numbers, and probably could not have been. Apart from the overtures, there is a certain stiffness about many numbers which is understandable in a first opera. This quality is also discernible in Beethoven's first oratorio and mass, Christus am Oelberge (1803) and the Mass in C (1807).

In broader musical terms, however, the importance of Leonore can scarcely be exaggerated. Faced by the task of matching music to an explicit narrative, and doubtless instructed by the Mozart operas which we know he consulted at the time, Beethoven here established a very large-scale dramatic continuity largely by tonal means. The Leonore overtures are famous for forecasting the opera's turning-point by incorporating the trumpet signals for the arrival of the Minister who confounds the villain Pizarro. But the overtures also assert C major as the opera's tonic key and A flat and E as subsidiary keys, and Leonore no.3 precedes its final triumphant tonic section with a recapitulation in G major; then the C minor/major of the first vocal number leads through many detours to moments central to the drama in E and A flat and then to G major, C minor and C major in the last two numbers. Even more than the 'Eroica' Symphony, Leonore prefigures the more abstract (and of course more concise) tonal structures of the later instrumental works.

In terms of idea, furthermore, Leonore provides a shining prototype for the heroic progress implied in a less explicit way by the instrumental music. And what is remarkable is to see Beethoven gradually evolving a personal operatic style in the course of writing, and rewriting, Leonore. From the somewhat servile echoes of French and German light opera in the opening numbers, he moved on to find an increasingly individual and elevated voice – for example, in the Prisoners' Chorus, the scena for Florestan, the duet 'O namenlose Freude' (revised from the Vestas Feuer fragments of 1803) and the long recitative before it which was the most regrettable of Beethoven's cuts for the 1814 version. To say that Beethoven approached his libretto with utter seriousness and idealism may seem like a truism; but of how many other first operas of the time can as much be said?

Around 1808 the enthusiasm and high daring of Beethoven's music begins to be tempered by ever-increasing technical virtuosity. Even when the pieces are still very powerful, as is often the case, they are smoother and a little safer than before. The stage work of this period is Egmont (1809–10), consisting not only of the well-known overture but also incidental music lasting 40 minutes, including a final 'Siegessymphonie' ('Symphony of Victory') in the face of disaster. Feelings that were turned inward in Leonore were turned outward in Egmont. Whereas the Leonore no.2 and no.3 overtures were involuted, explosive works dedicated to gigantic struggle, the Egmont overture is a tough, lucid one that comes by its Pyrrhic victories easily.

The change is clearest of all between the op.59 quartets and the 'Harp' Quartet of 1809 (a nickname deriving from its insistent functional pizzicatos). Nothing about this work is problematic. The climax of the first movement is a climax of sheer technical exhilaration, for in the coda Beethoven seems at last to have solved the problem of simulating orchestral idiom in a quartet. The second movement is serene and the third (in C minor) sounds like a speeded-up but smoothed-down version of the third movement of the Fifth Symphony. The finale is a set of simple variations on a suave 2/4 tune. This type of light finale recurs in the Violin Sonata op.96 (1812).

There are now no 'symphonic' sonatas, except perhaps the smaller-scaled 'Lebewohl' op.81a (1809–10). Beethoven's new concern in the first movements of sonatas and chamber music is lyricism, which inspires works of such different character as the Piano Sonata in F sharp op.78 (1809), the 'Archduke' Trio (1810–11) and the Violin Sonata op.96. Beethoven had never written such beautiful slow movements as he now wrote for the 'Harp' Quartet, the 'Archduke' Trio and the Fifth Piano Concerto (1809). The so-called 'Emperor' is by far the most 'symphonic' of his concertos and one of the strongest works he conceived. Yet in the very first bars, where the soloist and tutti join in a thunderous cadential celebration, the battle seems to be won even before the forces have been drawn up – as was certainly not the case in the introverted, searching Fourth Concerto first performed in 1807.

Writing his Seventh Symphony in 1811–12, Beethoven again reached for new horizons: the expanding introduction, the 6-4 chords spanning the Allegretto, the rolling ostinatos at the ends of the outer movements, the rhythmic preoccupation throughout. This work is perhaps less immediate in its emotional effect than the 'Eroica' or the Fifth, but its élan and its effortless control over musical processes at every level can make those earlier works seem more than a little hectic. The finale, all sinew, represents a particular advance, not only in elegance but also in sheer power.

Beethoven immediately capped this work with the delightful Eighth Symphony (1812), a salute to the symphonic ideal of the previous age. It has a comical slow movement and a slowish minuet in place of the now customary scherzo. Flashes of middle-period power occur only in the outer movements. Beethoven could hardly have planned a more genial gesture of farewell for a time to the symphony and to the decade of work produced under its aegis.

Another of the greatest works written between 1808 and 1812 refuses to fit any norms one may try to adduce for this period or, indeed, for any other – the Quartet in F minor op.95. The piece is unmatched in Beethoven's output for compression, exaggerated articulation and a corresponding sense of extreme tension. The harmonic layout is radical. Like op.57 and op.59 no.2, the first movement treats Neapolitan relationships, both in the first group (F–G flat) and in the second (D sharp–E flat or D flat). D is the key of the second movement, one of Beethoven's most beautiful, as well as one of his most disturbed – D major shadowed by D minor, with a chromatic fugato plunging into enharmonic mysteries. The F minor scherzo has a trio ranging from G flat to D and B minor.

This quartetto serioso, as Beethoven called it, looks back to the impressive minor-mode compositions of the period 1803–8 and looks forward to the style and mood of the late quartets. It was some time, however, before this promise of a new style could be realized.

16. Late-period style.

For a considerable time after 1812, Beethoven's production of important works fell off strikingly. These were difficult years for him, encompassing deep emotional turmoil and endless lesser distractions. In addition, he was probably suffering from something like exhaustion after the truly immense labours of the previous period. To speak only of the decade from the 'Eroica' Symphony to the Eighth, he had composed some 30 major works which in most cases involved serious rethinking of musical essentials. He had composed nearly as many slighter works and he had seen about 80 items through the press. Long or short, great or slight, they all required negotiations with publishers, correction of copyists' scores, and proofreading – unfortunately an activity that Beethoven never fully mastered.

But more generally, these were difficult years for any serious composer of Beethoven's generation. One can perhaps appreciate the growing sense of uncertainty that he must have felt as to artistic ends and means. On some level he was responding to powerful musical currents, which were soon to come flooding to the surface; the last works of Weber and Schubert and the first works of Berlioz, Chopin and Bellini all appeared during the 1820s. Like other great composers whose lives bridged a time of deep stylistic change – such as Josquin, Monteverdi and Schoenberg – Beethoven was facing a major intellectual challenge, whether or not he formulated it in intellectual terms. He had already met one such challenge, or one part of the challenge, by his reinterpretation of the sonata principle in his 'symphonic' works of 1803–12. Now the very basis of the sonata style was thrown in doubt. Beethoven had no easy answer. There is something private and problematic about the corpus of late-period works, and it is hardly accidental that their deep influence on the course of music came only much later, past the time of Beethoven's own younger contemporaries who learnt so much from the middle period.

Beethoven's concern for lyricism deepened throughout the late period. He has sometimes been criticized as an inept melodist, and it will be granted that when he was 23 he could not, like Rossini at a like age, produce the deathless melodies of a Barbiere. Yet some of his early Bonn songs make impressive lyric statements, and in the mid-1800s he developed a very effective type of slow hymn-like melody. This is continued, intensified and much refined in the late period; the melodic outline of Leonore's 'Komm, Hoffnung' (1805) recurs in the Adagio of the Quartet op.127 (1824–5). A new feature is the intimacy and delicacy already apparent in the Violin Sonata in G op.96 (1812), the Piano Sonatas in E minor op.90 (1814) and A op.101 (1816) and the Cello Sonata in C op.102 no.1 (1815).

There is also a growing interest in folklike melody, hardly surprising in one who made arrangements of over 150 folksongs for Thomson in these years. The song cycle An die ferne Geliebte op.98 (1816) marks Beethoven's closest approach to Goethe's ideal of the Volksweise as a basis for song composition (closest except for the tiny Ruf vom Berge woo147, 1816, which adapts an actual folksong melody). Simple little tunes evocative of folksong and folkdance are constantly turning up in the late quartets and other music.

In all this Beethoven appears to have been reaching for a more direct and intimate mode of communication. Two verbal adjuncts to such folklike essays can be regarded as symbolic: in the song cycle, the line 'ohne Kunstgepräng, erklungen' ('sounding without the adornments of Art'), set to music of rock-like simplicity, and in the Ninth Symphony, Schiller's famous apostrophe to universal brotherhood. In the best early Romantic spirit, Beethoven was seeking a new basic level of human contact through basic song, as though without sophistication or artifice. Another manifestation of this powerful – and sometimes disruptive – urge is the now rather frequent use of instrumental recitative and arioso, such as the 'beklemmt' ('constricted') passage in the Cavatina of the Quartet in Bflat op.130. Here instrumental music seems painfully to strive for articulate communication.

Several of the late works contain variation movements of a new kind. Earlier Beethoven had written many brilliant piano variations, from the precocious 'Venni amore' set of 1790–91 to the C minor Variations of 1806 – a series now to be capped by the encyclopedic Thirty-Three Variations on a Waltz by Diabelli. In his first Vienna period, however, important variation movements within larger works are not frequent. More of these occur in the middle period. Generally the variations are of the progressively decorative variety (opp.57, 61, 67, 74, 97), a type that also continues into the late years (opp.111, 125). But in the Sonata in E op.109 and the late quartets, as well as in the Diabelli set, Beethoven evolved a new type of variation in which the members take a much more individual and profoundly reinterpreted view of the original theme. The theme seems transformed or

probed to its fundamentals, rather than merely varied. All this suggests a changing concept of musical unity, now seen as an evolution from within rather than as a conciliation of contrasting forces: a Darwinian concept, perhaps, rather than a Hegelian one.

In the most general sense, variation may also be said to inspire the transcendent fugal finales of the Hammerklavier Sonata and the Quartet in B flat (the 'Grosse Fuge'). The fugatos that occur in not a few of Beethoven's earlier pieces hardly prepare one for his preoccupation with contrapuntal forms in the late years; scarcely a significant work now lacks an impressive fugal section or even a full-scale fugue bristling with learned devices. Evidently he was looking for some other means of musical movement than that provided by the style he had inherited from Haydn and Mozart; fugue is a more dense, even style which places harmonic action in a very different light. In Beethoven's hands fugue became a means of flattening out the dramatic aspects of tonality. (It was not the only means that he devised, as witness the second and third movements of the Quartet in A minor.) Related to this general tendency is Beethoven's frequent avoidance in the late music of obvious dominant effects, his characteristic undercutting of tonic triads by 6-4 chords, and his somewhat wayward experiments with the church modes. As noted above, his early plans for a ninth symphony include a 'pious song … in the ancient modes'.

There is in fact a persistent retrospective current in Beethoven's late period. He published or considered publishing several of his old songs (Bundeslied, Der Kuss, Mit Mädeln sich vertragen), reworked the Opferlied of 1794, resuscitated some old piano bagatelles for op.119 and reworked another in the second movement of the A minor Quartet. He finally set Schiller's Ode to Joy – a project first considered about 1790 – to a tune adumbrated in works of 1795 and 1808 (woo118, op.80). An archaizing urge is manifest in his interest in strict counterpoint and modality, even if the resulting pieces hardly sound archaic; over and above this, some of them look back to certain specific academic exercises recommended by Beethoven's old teacher Albrechtsberger. It was only in his late years that Beethoven developed his well-known penchant for writing canons d'occasion. Whereas in the 1800s he had spoken well of Cherubini, now his interest settled on Palestrina, Bach – he sketched an overture on the notes B–A–C–H – and especially Handel. Handel's influence on the overture Die Weihe des Hauses (1822) is startling.

Yet ultimately Beethoven's real concern with fugue, as with variation and lyricism, was to mould these elements so that they could be embedded integrally into the global concerns of the sonata style. The presentation, development and return of musical material within a finely controlled tonal field remained central to his artistic endeavour. Fugues perform the function of development sections in opp.101, 106, 111 and less directly in op.110 and the Ninth Symphony finale. Then the fugue at the beginning of the C sharp minor Quartet acts as an exposition, presenting the basic tonal and thematic material that is worked out in the rest of the piece. The variation movements of opp.127 and 135 have a powerful tonal dynamic built in. So does the Diabelli Variations – thanks to another fugue, which precedes the final, recapitulatory variation. Even An die ferne Geliebte arranges its cycle of six artless melodies in a purposeful order of keys and features a recapitulation followed by a miniature 'symphonic' coda.

17. Late-period works.

In some ways the few compositions finished between 1814 and 1816 – the song cycle and the sonatas op.90, op.102 nos.1 and 2, and op.101 – stand closer to Romantic music of the 1830s than any other Beethoven pieces. The opening movement of op.101, a genuine miniature sonata form in an unbroken lyrical sweep, begins quietly on the dominant as though the music was already in progress: an almost Schumannesque effect. The returns of the first-movement themes (marked 'mit der innigsten Empfindung' and 'teneramente') later in the course of this sonata and in op.102 no.1 do not sound like characteristic Beethovenian recapitulations. They are nostalgic recollections which again suggest Schumann and his generation. All four sonatas carry on much further than before Beethoven's search for more fluid solutions to the problem of the form of the total sonata, in terms of the weight, balance and mood of the various movements.

The Sonata in B op.106, arbitrarily, but not inappropriately called the 'Hammerklavier' (both op.101 and op.109 are also subtitled 'für das Hammerklavier'), occupied Beethoven from late 1817 to late 1818; it was his first really large project in five years. Like the 'Eroica' Symphony, it occupies a pivotal position in his output, though the differences between the two works are striking. The 'Eroica' is one of the most popular and 'available' of his compositions, while the Hammerklavier is probably the most arcane. In different ways each represented a breakthrough for Beethoven, one like the crest of a great wave and the other like the breaking of a dam. And while both were works of revolutionary novelty, the Hammerklavier also paradoxically represents a reaction, in

that Beethoven reverted to the traditional four-movement pattern in place of the fluid formal experiments of the sonatas of 1814–16, and turned away from their tone of lyrical intimacy.

One feature Beethoven did pick up from them was the idea of an abrasive fugal finale, present in the Cello Sonata in D op.102 no.2. The Hammerklavier fugue with its famous cancrizans section is integrated into the total conception with astonishing care and rigour. An improvisatory introduction to the finale seems to grope for the fugue or, perhaps, to will it into existence (something of the kind happens in other late finales: opp.110, 125, 133, 135). Then the shape of the subject and the modulation plan both follow a pattern that has been established firmly (not to say exhaustively) in each of the previous movements. This is construction by means of descending 3rds, acting to a large extent as a substitute for the traditional dominant relation, and creating large-scale conflict between the tonic B flat and B that is arrestingly resolved.

Beethoven had never written a work that depended so thoroughly, in all its aspects, on a single musical idea. The extremity of its conception, and of its demands on the performer, are as much a part of the character of this piece as are ideas of heroism in the 'Eroica'.

In the three sonatas of 1820–22 Beethoven returned to the proportions and preoccupations of the sonatas of 1814–16. Of all his works, the Sonata in E op.109 is perhaps the most original in form, in respect both to its first movement and to the total aggregate. The first movement is another sonata form in an unbroken lyrical sweep, like the first movement of op.101, but much more complex and shadowy in quality, thanks first of all to the change from Vivace, ma non troppo to Adagio espressivo at the second group – after a mere eight bars. The next movement, an explosive Prestissimo, combines the functions of a more lucid sonata-form statement and a scherzo. A slow theme and variations follows, concluding with an extraordinarily serene da capo of the original hymn-like theme.

Under the lyrical spell of the Sonata in A op.110, even the fugue in the finale is tuneful and positively smooth in counterpoint. And in the Sonata in C minor op.111, after the first movement has recalled in a spiritualized way all the 'C minor' gestures of the early Vienna years, the variations of the second (and last) movement create a visionary aura that had never been known in music before. This mood is recaptured at the end of the Diabelli Variations.

Between October 1822 and February 1824 Beethoven completed three works which are in one way or another as gigantic as the Hammerklavier Sonata: the Diabelli Variations, the Mass in D (Missa solemnis) and the Ninth Symphony. Work on the variations and the mass had been in progress since early 1819. Beethoven's slowness in composing the mass can be explained in part by his inevitable resolve to approach the text in the highest seriousness and treat the setting as a personal testament. Indeed, the religious impetus spilled over into his next composition, the Ninth Symphony, with its setting of stanzas from Schiller's half-bacchanalian, half-religious Ode to Joy. Mass and symphony stand together as the crowning statement about non-musical ideas in Beethoven's later life – a 'religious' statement to match or, rather, to supplant the 'heroic' statement made in the 'Eroica' Symphony and Leonore nearly 20 years earlier. Between the two late works there are many parallels of musical gesture and language.

But whereas the Ninth Symphony, despite grumblings that are heard from time to time about the finale, has always been and remains one of Beethoven's most successful and influential compositions, the same cannot be said of the Mass. It is perhaps unfortunate for the dissemination and appreciation of this work that the relaxed concert conventions of Beethoven's day – at the première only three separate movements were ventured – no longer obtain. If they did, the musical public might well come to appreciate and love the simpler movements, at least: the restrained and lyrical Kyrie, one of the composer's loveliest inventions; the Sanctus, with its organ-like interlude and ethereal violin solo in the Benedictus; and the Agnus, whose touching plea for what Beethoven described as 'inner and outer peace' is twice interrupted by exciting military fanfares and melodramatic recitatives, not to speak of one giddy modulating fugue.

Even the few statements made above are enough to suggest how much of this mass is unorthodox, both musically and liturgically. Unorthodoxies are multiplied in the Gloria and Credo (always the problematic movements for composers of masses). It is particularly in these two central movements that the traditions of the Viennese mass are made to accommodate older traditions deliberately resuscitated; Beethoven rubs shoulders with Haydn (the Haydn of the masses), Palestrina, Handel and Bach. Sublimity, awe and pathos are evoked unforgettably, but they are perhaps evoked too frequently and in too rapid a succession to leave a satisfactory total impression. One can feel this even while acknowledging Beethoven's strenuous efforts at organization: the

use of recurring themes for ‘Gloria in excelsis Deo’ and ‘Credo, credo’, the powerful tonal dynamic, and the weighting effect of the tremendous fugues ‘In gloria Dei Patris’ and ‘Et vitam venturi’.

In the Mass Beethoven was obviously constrained by the pre-set text; in the symphony he chose his own text. He also chose the context for it: not within an intellectual liturgical structure, but in the real world of experience – for paradoxically or not, that is what the three opening instrumental movements seems to have meant to Beethoven. Ultimately, in the introduction to the finale, this world is rejected in favour of Schiller’s transcendent vision of the joys of brotherhood, set ‘without the adornments of Art’ as an unaccompanied melody of universal folklike simplicity. From his experience of oneness with his fellows and with nature, says Schiller, man receives his intimation of a loving Father dwelling above the stars. This passage of the poem Beethoven set in a solemn religious style recalling that used in parts of the Mass in D.

As the one late-period Beethoven symphony, the Ninth is in a sense retrospective in resuming the ‘symphonic’ ideal which for a decade had inspired little music. Retrospective, too, is the frank echo of revolutionary French cantatas in the choral finale. Yet as a gesture, this finale shows once again Beethoven’s uncanny grasp of essences below ‘the adornments of Art’. As Wagner always insisted, words and a choir with soloists to sing them seem to force their way into the symphony in order to make instrumental music fully articulate, to resolve the conflict of the earlier movements with a consummation of unexampled ecstasy.

In the late period Beethoven’s treatment of sonata form grows more and more subtle and even equivocal. For example, he now tended to minimize the formal development section and place a major climax after, not at, the point of recapitulation (see opp.106, 130, 132). In the face of this, the first movement of the Ninth provides a magnificent reassertion of the traditional dynamic – though with a difference. During the famous and much imitated introduction, the main theme (another ‘evolving’ theme, one which seems to evolve out of timeless infinity) grows up over a hollow dominant 5th, A–E; then at the recapitulation this returns fortissimo as a tonic D–A with F sharp in the bass: an enhanced recapitulation from which all sense of bluster has been filtered away and replaced by what Tovey called catastrophe, and others brutishness. The subsidiary tonal areas of this movement, B flat and a momentary B natural, are ‘composed out’ in memorable fashion throughout the rest of the symphony, as is the basic D minor/major tropism of the first-movement recapitulation.

After completing the Ninth Symphony in early 1824, Beethoven spent the two and a half years that remained to him writing with increasing ease, it seems, and exclusively in the medium of the string quartet. The five late string quartets contain Beethoven’s greatest music, or so at least many listeners in the 20th century came to feel. The first of the five, op.127 in E flat of 1824–5, shows all the important characteristics of this unique body of music. It opens with another lyrical sonata form containing themes in two different tempos (as in op.109); the Maestoso theme melts into a faster one, wonderfully intimate and tender – even though it is constructed in three-part species counterpoint over a cantus firmus. The slow variation movement is of the new, more integral kind and the scherzo takes its impetus from a fugato. The finale burgeons with country-dance tunes, of a kind associated in the other late quartets with the interior dance movements (which one can scarcely call scherzos; certainly Beethoven no longer did so). In a brilliant coda, this finale submits to a sort of spirtualized dissolution, an effect prefigured in the Quartet in F minor op.95 and repeated in the next quartet, the A minor op.132.

The composition of op.132 was interrupted by a serious illness in April 1825, and an extraordinary ‘Hymn of thanksgiving to the divinity, from a convalescent, in the Lydian mode’ forms the central movement (of five). Beethoven’s intimations of mortality take the form of modal cantus firmus variations dimly recalled from Albrechtsberger; they alternate movingly with a purely tonal section entitled ‘Feeling new strength’. Cantus firmus writing is also in evidence in the first movement, as the themes in different tempos are now closely woven together. Extreme rhythmic fluidity combines with extreme concentration of detail. Beethoven had never before written such a deeply anguished composition.

In the Quartet in B flat op.130, the confrontation of themes in different tempos gives the opening movement an elusive, even whimsical feeling. A deliberate sense of dissociation is intensified by the succession of five more movements, often in remote keys, with something of the effect of ‘character pieces’ in a Baroque suite. The feverish little Presto is followed by movements labelled by Beethoven Poco scherzando, Alla danza tedesca and Cavatina – and then by the ‘Grosse Fuge’, which seems to bear on its convulsive shoulders the responsibility for asserting order after so much disruption earlier in the piece. Its sections, built on various transformations of a cantus firmus subject almost have the weight of separate movements, as in the Ninth Symphony finale. The lyric beauty of the slow G flat section and the Gemüthlichkeit of the recurring section in 6/8 metre sometimes go unappreciated, it seems, by listeners awed by the determined dissonant fury of the others. A closed book to the

19th century, to Stravinsky the 'Grosse Fuge' was 'this absolutely contemporary piece of music that will be contemporary for ever'.

Years before, Beethoven had begun to extend the underlying principles of the sonata style to embrace the entire aggregate of movements in a piece. Now he found his largest movements breaking down into 'sub-movements' with a subsidiary integrity of their own. In the event, the Quartet in B flat proved to be quite literally disruptive. Beethoven sanctioned the removal of the fugal finale after the first performance, had it issued separately as op.133 and provided the quartet with a new, less radical (and less splendid) finale.

As though in reaction to this study in musical dissociation, Beethoven next wrote the most closely integrated of all his large compositions. From this point of view, the Quartet of C sharp minor op.131 may be seen as the culmination of his significant effort as a composer ever since going to Vienna. The seven movements run continuously into one another, and for the first time in Beethoven's music there is an emphatic and unmistakable thematic connection between the first movement and the last – not a reminiscence, but a functional parallel which helps bind the whole work together. A work of the deepest subtlety and beauty, at the end this quartet still seems to hinge on a stroke of the most elemental nature, as rushing D major scales in the finale recall the Neapolitan relationship set up between the opening fugue in C sharp minor and the following Allegro in D. Charles Rosen has remarked on Beethoven's continual

attempt to strip away, at some point in each large work, all decorative and even expressive elements from the musical material so that part of the structure of tonality is made to appear for a moment naked and immediate, and its presence in the rest of the work as a dynamic and temporal force suddenly becomes radiant.

A comparison with the analogous Neapolitan articulation at the end of the Quartet op.59 no.2 of 1806 shows how Beethoven could make such effects tell at the end of his lifetime.

The last quartet, op.135 in F, is a brilliant study in Classical nostalgia, though it does not lack a vision of the abyss in the second movement and a characteristic response through hymnody in the third. (A highly compressed variation set in the key of D flat, marked 'Lento assai, cantante e tranquillo', this piece was originally drafted as a postscript to the finale of op.131.) In the finale of op.135, when the main theme (marked with the words 'Es muss sein!') appears as a simple-minded inversion of the motif of the slow introduction (marked 'Muss es sein?'), a strong suspicion arises of parody – a self-parody of the familiar evolutionary slow introductions of these late years (cf op.111). The thematic tag itself was taken over from a contemporary humorous canon (woo196).

Like the Eighth Symphony, op.135 seems to mark the composer's farewell to a fully realized episode in his artistic journey. The writing of the late quartets was stimulated by external factors – Prince Golitsïn's commission and the return of the Schuppanzigh Quartet to Vienna – but it continued under its own impetus after the commission was fulfilled. The cohesiveness of this crowning episode of Beethoven's compositional activity is underlined by the observation made by various critics that three (or more) of the late quartets share melodic material. Even without this, they share some special stylistic characteristics; but even with all that, it is hard to accept the further implication that the individual works are aesthetically incomplete unless viewed as some sort of 'triptych' or 'cycle'. This may be true of the poems by T.S. Eliot which they inspired but not of the original quartets, any more than it is of other clearly associated works in Beethoven's output, such as the Mass in D and the Ninth Symphony.

18. Personal characteristics.

Beethoven left an indelible impression on all those who encountered him in the years of his maturity, and even for his contemporaries there were certain features of his life – his idiosyncratic working methods, for example, his mournful isolation through deafness, and the nobility of his total dedication to his art – that endowed him as an almost mythical figure. The course subsequently taken by a romantic image of the composer in the years after his death is discussed in §19 below. Here something must be said of the realities from which the myths drew their strength.

He was neither good-looking nor equipped with more than a very rudimentary education; it was by the force of his character that he produced such a powerful effect on those around him. This, notoriously, had its thorny side. As a young man he was already known to be difficult, impatient and mistrustful, an 'unlicked bear'. A basic problem, it seems, was his ineptness at reading his own motives and interpreting those of others; thus misunderstandings were frequent, which his hot temper magnified into quarrels, even fisticuffs. But typically

these were followed by reconciliations and scenes of penitence or remorse. What his capricious and at times outrageous behaviour could not dim was the enormous appeal of his personality. He fascinated and endeared himself to men and women of many sorts, who continued to value his friendship no matter how rough a ride he gave them. This magnetic quality was most in evidence in his earlier years, but even near the end of his life, when he was often wretchedly ill and his deafness was impenetrable, there was competition for the privilege of rendering him services, and devoted friends were never far off.

In his relationships certain recurrent patterns can be observed. His male friendships fell into two broad types. There were the warm and intimate ones with companions such as Wegeler, Amenda and Stephan von Breuning, and perhaps also Franz von Brunsvik and Ignaz von Gleichenstein, men with whom he felt he could share his most private feelings and aspirations. Some considerable way behind came his relations with many others who were valued more for their disinterested usefulness to Beethoven than for any depth of shared emotion. Chief of these was the amiable bachelor Zmeskall; the two Lichnowksy brothers can also be counted among them, and in later years his factotum Schindler and perhaps the young Karl Holz, for whom however Beethoven also entertained some genuinely warm feelings. Most of the first select class of true friends were unmarried at the time of Beethoven's greatest intimacy with them. It is noteworthy, too, that both Wegeler and Amenda, the two with whom he maintained a serene relationship for the longest time, were in distant countries for most of his life; the friendship with Breuning, who remained in Vienna, was interrupted by a breach that lasted many years.

Beethoven's relations with women have been discussed much more fully than his friendships with men; they form the subject of a large but mainly speculative and sometimes very silly literature. He was certainly highly susceptible to feminine beauty and charm. The reliable Wegeler reported that 'he was never without a love, and most of them were from the upper ranks'. Of his attachments in Bonn little is known beyond a name or two, but in his early years in Vienna – again according to Wegeler – he was always involved in love affairs and 'made some conquests that many an Adonis would have found difficult if not impossible'. What these affairs amounted to is another matter. No doubt there were some trivial sexual adventures, but it is hard to avoid the impression that he also spent much time in a showy pursuit of women who could not, or would not, return his affection, and the very fact that most of them were 'from the upper ranks' meant that there was usually an insuperable barrier of social class to prevent the relationship from going too far. Though Beethoven always professed his desire for a true union of hearts, many of the women that he admired were contentedly married or were already committed to another man. Thus he was usually doomed to get nowhere – as perhaps, unconsciously, he intended. Something of the same pattern can be seen in the two or three relationships with women, described earlier, that involved Beethoven most deeply. To judge from the course that they took it seems plain that he shrank from a total involvement with a woman, and that he came to regard the household that he established with his nephew as in some ways a substitute for marriage and family.

That his life was in many respects lonely, therefore, comes as no surprise. It is of course the overwhelming fact of his deafness that makes his personal history so poignantly different from that of other musicians. Its effect on his career was the long-term one of confirming the direction in which his interests were probably already turning; it obliged him at all events to commit himself almost entirely to composing, and to renounce any thoughts he may have had of pursuing fortune as a travelling virtuoso. But the impact of deafness on his social life was sharper and more immediate. It sank him in deep depression and led him to shun company for a time. In fact the years from 1800 to 1802, in which he brought himself to face the likelihood that his handicap would be permanent, were marked by a profound personal crisis, the resolution of which set the pattern for much of the rest of his life. Forced to recognize more and more that he was to be cut off from a part of human experience, he succeeded in coming to terms with an unusual and essentially solitary style of life. No doubt this reinforced his conviction, manifest even before the onset of deafness, that some of the rules of normal social behaviour did not apply to him.

There are many anecdotes of his peculiarities in this respect. Several concern his attitude to his superiors in rank, and to authority in general. Doubtless only too aware that he depended on aristocratic families for his financial support, he resolutely declined after his departure from Bonn to 'play the courtier' or to show the deference and obedience normally expected from musicians in circles of the nobility. He was often most unwilling, for instance, to perform on the piano if called on unexpectedly by his hosts to do so; sometimes he refused outright, and even left the soirée in a temper. He would also break off playing if people showed their inattention by chattering. The formal court etiquette that surrounded the Archduke Rudolph was especially irksome to him, and in the end it was Rudolph who surrendered by giving orders that the rules were not to be applied to Beethoven. Even in matters of dress Beethoven seems to have been unwilling to show the conformity expected of him, though in his earlier years in Vienna he was often smartly turned out.

This impatience with discipline and authority had more than one aspect. Temperamentally he was utterly unable to adopt a submissive attitude, and even in music he found it distasteful to accept the direction of living teachers (such as Haydn) or dead theoreticians. Moreover, as a child of his time, he was swayed by the ideals of the French Revolution; they must have dominated his student days, although a certain ambivalence can be detected in his attitude to them, as well as to the man who for a time embodied them, Napoleon. In his brusque dismissal of the conventions of an aristocratic society, in fact, Beethoven was less of the egalitarian than the élitist. He had little use for the common run of humanity, regarding himself as an artist – he was fond of the rather grand term 'Tondichter' ('poet in sound') – and, as such, at least the equal of anyone raised to eminence by birth or wealth. He accorded the greatest respect to other artists, particularly writers, and was puzzled and disappointed when he discovered that Goethe, whom he admired above all other poets, behaved over-deferentially to royal personages: was not Goethe as great as they were?

In matters of religion his views, as might be expected, were idiosyncratic and somewhat incoherent. It was not a subject that he discussed much with others. He was brought up in the tolerant Catholicism of the late 18th century, but the formal side of religion held little interest for him, though he went to some trouble while composing the Missa solemnis to ensure that he fully understood the words of the Mass. The deity of his faith was a personal God, a universal father to whom he constantly turned for consolation and forgiveness. That much is clear from the many private confessions and prayers scattered throughout his papers. Among philosophical books he was moved by the moral reflections of Kant. Perhaps more surprisingly, he found certain oriental writings on the immaterial nature of God sympathetic to him, and he copied out a number of their texts. He even framed some ancient Egyptian inscriptions on the nature of the deity and kept them on his writing-desk.

He also felt the presence of God in the beauty of nature, and sought to worship him in the countryside, having been greatly influenced by Christian Sturm's Betrachtungen der Werke Gottes in der Natur. Beethoven's love of the country was an enduring characteristic. He left Vienna for some months almost every summer and settled in one of the outlying villages such as Mödling or Heiligenstadt, or in the spa of Baden somewhat further afield. There he would take long, solitary walks in the woods and find refreshment of spirit. 'No-one', he wrote to Therese Malfatti in 1810, 'can love the country as much as I do. For surely woods, trees and rocks produce the echo which man desires to hear'.

When on his walks he would usually carry a bundle of folded music paper, and pause from time to time to make entries in it with a pencil. This activity was regarded by his contemporaries as a harmless eccentricity. They laughed too at his singular behaviour in restaurants, where he would sometimes sit for hours sunk in thought and then offer to pay for a meal that he had not eaten. Beethoven was certainly often strangely unaware of his physical surroundings and preoccupied with his own thoughts – even in Bonn the word 'raptus' had been jokingly applied to his fits of emotional inaccessibility – and the squalor of his rooms was such that only he could tolerate it.

Yet in relation to the thing about which he cared most – composing, and presenting his works to the public – Beethoven could hardly be said to be ill-organized. He had a regular domestic routine, rising early, making coffee by grinding a precise number of coffee-beans, and then working at his desk until two or three o'clock, when he had a meal. The morning's work was interrupted, though also in a sense maintained, by two or three short excursions out of doors, during which he continued to make sketches on music paper. Several of these 'pocket' sketchbooks have survived, together with a much larger number of 'desk' sketchbooks in which Beethoven worked when at home. The significance of these volumes, with page after page of seemingly illegible entries, was not understood by his contemporaries, who regarded his devotion to them as yet one more sign of his eccentricity. Only later did it come to be recognized that the sketchbooks provide a unique documentation, although a somewhat fragmentary and at times enigmatic one, of his creative processes.

When a work had been completed it was Beethoven's concern to find a publisher for it. The importance that he attached to publishers throughout his life is shown by the extent and range of his correspondence with them – for he contrived to persuade himself that his livelihood depended on selling his music to them, though he was in fact maintained largely by aristocratic subventions. At that time all a composer could expect was a lump sum for the sale of a work. Royalties were unknown. Nor was there any international copyright; within his own country a publisher usually enjoyed some protection for the works he had bought, but they could be freely copied (pirated) abroad. Thus it was a composer's concern to obtain the largest sum for each composition. In the case of Beethoven, whose later works involved many months or even years of labour, there was every inducement to compare the offers of various publishers and to play them off against each other – a form of behaviour that some modern critics, alerted no doubt by Beethoven's shrill protestations of commercial probity, have found unattractive.

One plan that interested him was that of publishing a work simultaneously in more than one country – something that Haydn had done with success. The advantage was that a composer could count on receiving two or more fees, and was thus able to settle for a lower sum from each publisher. From the publisher's point of view little was lost by sharing a work with a foreign publisher, since in practice the market of each country was more or less independent. In spite of the many practical difficulties of delivering manuscripts and synchronizing publication, Beethoven succeeded in getting a fair number of his compositions published by two or more firms in different countries at about the same time.

Beethoven's chief publishers may be briefly listed, together with the dates at which they were most active in publishing him: Artaria & Co., Vienna (1795–8), and two of Artaria's former partners, Tranquillo Mollo (1798–1801) and Giovanni Cappi (1802); Hoffmeister & Kühnel, Leipzig (1801–4); Bureau des Arts et d'Industrie, Vienna (1802–8); Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig (1802–3, 1809–12); Steiner & Co., Vienna (1815–17); A.M. Schlesinger, Berlin, and M. Schlesinger, Paris (1821–3 and 1827); Schott, Mainz (1825–7). Other publishers, such as Simrock of Bonn, occasionally issued important works. In the English market one firm predominated: that of Muzio Clementi (1810–23), who secured the English rights to a large number of works by direct dealings with Beethoven, and brought them out at the same time as the Viennese, Leipzig or Paris editions. Since these English editions were produced independently of the continental ones, each is potentially important for establishing an authentic text. George Thomson of Edinburgh also deserves a word or two. A civil servant and musical amateur who devoted much of his life to collecting national (and particularly Scottish) folksongs, he had already published several volumes of melodies with accompaniments by Pleyel, Kozeluch and Haydn before he approached Beethoven in 1803 with the request that he should write six sonatas introducing Scottish melodies. Although nothing came of this suggestion or other similar ones, Beethoven did in the end undertake to write piano trio accompaniments to a great quantity of Scottish, Welsh and Irish melodies submitted by Thomson. The work was carried out between 1809 and 1820, a period that included some otherwise barren years. In 1818 and 1819 Beethoven also wrote for Thomson some simple variations for flute and piano on national melodies (opp.105, 107: see fig.7).

Physically Beethoven was of no more than average height, but his stocky frame conveyed a sense of great muscular strength. He had broad shoulders and a short neck. His pockmarked face, with its wide nose and bushy eyebrows, was described by some as ugly and was certainly remote from the conventional good looks of the time, although it was recognized as having a quality of nobility about it. In youth his hair was coal-black and his complexion swarthy; in middle age, partly as a result of ill-health, his hair became grey and his face rather florid. What impressed those who met him was the intensity of the gaze from his deep-set eyes, and the enormous animation of his melancholy features and indeed of the whole of his restless body. This vitality is not captured in most of the portraits and sketches made in his lifetime. The best representation is probably the 1814 engraving by Blasius Höfel (based on a pencil drawing by Louis Letronne, but touched up from the life; fig.13 above). The bust by Franz Klein (fig.5 above) is based on a life-mask of 1812, so the features have claims to authenticity; and the sketches by Lyser showing Beethoven walking in the street, though not authenticated, also carry conviction (fig.16 above). The idealized portraits and busts of more recent years must be regarded as part of the Beethoven cult; they owe nothing to literal or even to poetic truth.

19. Posthumous influence and reception.

The Beethoven we know today cannot be separated from the history of his critical and popular reception. No other Western composer has been amplified to the same degree by posterity; and none has come to embody musical art the way Beethoven has. More than a composer, he remains one of the pre-eminent cultural heroes of the modern West. For a comprehensive view of the full impact of Beethoven, three related strands of the history of his reception must be considered: the myth of the artist as hero; the deep and pervasive influence of his music on later music and thought about music; and the often disturbing political appropriations of his music.

(i) History of the myth.

(ii) Beethoven's influence on music and musical thought.

(iii) Political reception.

(i) History of the myth.

Beethoven's music enjoyed an almost immediate appeal among the growing class of bourgeois music lovers, and its popularity has never wavered. Moreover, due to an irresitible conjunction of powerfully communicative music and compelling biographical circumstances, the mythically viewed image of Beethoven the creative artist took hold quickly and tenaciously, finding little or no resistance until the 20th century. To this day, the Beethoven myth remains an indelible part of the popular imagination.

Even within his lifetime, Beethoven began to be seen within emergent conceptions of the creative artist, which are developed in a growing literary tradition of Romantically-conceived works about artists and their lives. Writers such as Bettina Brentano, who invoked the newly fascinating power of electricity as a metaphor for Beethoven's creative powers, or E.T.A. Hoffmann, who placed Beethoven at the very portals of the 'infinite realm of the spirit', embraced him as a living example of the artist as suffering outsider and as courageous hero.

Public awareness of Beethoven's socially isolating deafness was galvanized by the posthumous discovery of the 1802 Heiligenstadt Testament. This selfconscious account of a wracking martyrdom for the sake of art may itself have relied on themes from the same literary tradition that Brentano, Hoffmann and others were to draw upon when writing about Beethoven. Beethoven's famous letter to the 'Immortal Beloved', also discovered after his death, help confirm his stature as a true Romantic. Here was a creative artist who felt cut off from the simple communal joys of society, who yearned for an idealized love, and who was able to react to these privations with an outpouring of music conceived on an unprecedented scale. A more potent model for the Romantic view of the artist could hardly be imagined. Add to this the fact that music itself was newly elevated by leading aesthetic theories to the sublime copestone of all artistic endeavour, and the mythic ascension of Beethoven seems virtually inevitable.

Several defining aspects of the critical reception of Beethoven contributed to the perpetuation of the Beethoven myth. He was widely held, from the earliest years of the 19th century, to be the culminating figure in a progressive triumvirate of musical greatness: Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. Not only is he here placed as the highest term of a triad, he was also understood to have descended from a line of genius: he was possessed of a secure spiritual patrimony. In the benevolent formulation of his patron Count Waldstein, Beethoven went to off to Vienna to receive 'Mozart's spirit from Haydn's hands'. Such early consecration is a powerful trope in myths of the great artist.

Another decisive triadic formation in the composer's reception is found in the early and sustained adherence to the idea of three style periods in his musical output. Here, too, the attractions of a triadic framework are manifest: they include the importance of the triad as a venerable organizing strategy (beginning, middle, end) and as a narrative structure that can support both an organic view of Beethoven's compositional development (the middle period as bloom, the late period as decay) as well as a teleological view (the first two periods as preparatory to, and culminating in, the third).

These two views have coloured much of the history of Beethoven's critical reception. In the broadest account of that history, one may discern a turn from the organic view to the teleological view, from regarding the middle period as the peak of Beethoven's output to regarding the late period as such. Indeed, of all his music, the music of the so-called late period has undergone the biggest transformation in its reception. Many early critics held these works to be the symptoms of illness; the prevailing later view prefers to understand them as the highest testimony to his genius.

The decisive turn to this latter view was helped by Wagner's influential monograph of 1870, written for Beethoven's centenary, in which he glorified Beethoven's deafness as a trait of enhanced interiority — the deaf composer forced to listen inwardly. The turn inward is a leading characteristic of 19th-century subjectivity; in this cultural field, Beethoven's deafness was initially understood as the tragic plight of the suffering artist and then as the guarantee of interiority, the sine qua non for the production of the highest art. This view reached its summit in the treatment by J.W.N. Sullivan, writing in 1927, for whom the late-period music marked a synthesizing vision of life in which all suffering is subsumed, 'a final stage of illumination' in the composer's spiritual development.

But around the same time as Wagner's quasi-mystical invocation of Beethoven's creative process, a more empirical approach to the composer was gaining ground. Taking advantage of an enormous amount of existing documentation, Alexander Thayer gradually published his celebrated biography, in which he sought to counteract mistaken views of previous biographers by carefully restricting himself to the known facts about Beethoven's life. Imaginative speculation about the composer's spiritual life yielded to a thickly detailed account

of Beethoven's personal and professional circumstances. That he never completed the biography may well be due to his Victorian distaste for what he began to descry under the varnish of the myth.

Thayer prided himself on his use of Beethoven's actual sketchbooks to help solve problems of chronology. The study and transcription of Beethoven's sketches was pioneered by Gustav Nottebohm, again in the 1870s; they have since been the object of assiduous labour by analysts and musicologists. For in their sprawling and unruly traces, Beethoven's voluminous sketches provide a palpable sense of the composer's workshop, one which at once confirms the compositional act as both a human undertaking and a titanic struggle. Maintaining a status that hovers between holy relic and evidentiary documentation, the sketches offer the attractions of objectivity while keeping signature tenets of the myth alive and well. Thayer's biography and Nottebohm's work on the sketches together furnished the foundation for modern Beethoven scholarship.

If late 19-century positivism thus began to peer behind the aura of the Beethoven myth, a full frontal assault on it was not launched until the 20th century. Like so many other products of early 19th-century culture, the Beethoven myth faced the cleansing fires of 20th-century disillusionment — but the figure itself remained as potent as ever. The early years of the century witnessed a concerted effort to wrest Beethoven away from the Romantics and reclaim him for Classical art. In 1927, the centenary year of Beethoven's death, a spate of essays, including those by Hermann Abert, Guido Adler and D.F. Tovey, argued for the classical virtues of Beethoven's music. Arnold Schmitz wrote an entire book polemically engaging what he called 'the Romantic image of Beethoven'. For Schmitz, Beethoven did not inhabit some romanticized realm of art separate from reality and its laws but rather deeply respected and supported the traditions of musical art in the service of a distinctly moral vision. In Germany, this view of the composer as a standard bearer of normality and moral health began to spread in conjunction with overtly nationalistic appropriations of Beethoven. In England, the criticism of Tovey also stressed the healthy normality of Beethoven's art.

Several decades later, Beethoven the man would submit to uncompromising psychoanalysis, emerging as anything but healthy. In their 1954 study Beethoven and his Nephew, the psychoanalysts E. and R. Sterba portray Beethoven as something like a hero of a lurid naturalist drama; they describe a disturbed man and the people he hurt. Maynard Solomon's more tempered account of 1977 (revised 1998) sympathetically relates the foibles and pretensions of a humanly flawed artist. Both accounts refuse to flinch from the more troubling aspects of the creative persona, and both go far to transform the mythical figure into a flesh and blood man.

Related to these efforts are recent attempts to augment our knowledge of the economic conditions of Beethoven's era, the system of patronage that served him so well, and the exact nature of his own financial circumstances. All these studies choose to observe Beethoven from the perspective of the social, commercial and psychological forces of the modern world. Thus they serve to place him within the traffic and commerce of a recognizable reality; he no longer appears as a tortured but transcendent onlooker from some romanticized realm of genius.

Perhaps the most unmistakable sign of demythification is the steadily growing interest in reception studies, for here the Beethoven myth is treated and studied as a cultural construction – the interest now lies in the nature of its formation and persistence. Initially prompted by the attractions of reception theory in literature and further motivated by a more strictly postmodern interest in the ways and means of the musical canon, the study of reception is now one of the more active branches of writing about Beethoven.

Meanwhile, traditional historical scholarship is by no means finished with Beethoven. The 1980s and 90s witnessed several crucially important additions to the foundation laid by Thayer and Nottebohm. First and foremost, the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn has continued to produce its indispensable editions: by the end of the 20th century Beethoven's letters were published in a new and definitive seven-volume edition (1996–8); the transcription and publication of the conversation books were lacking only two of its twelve projected volumes (1968–); and the even longer-term projects of the Neue Ausgabe (of all Beethoven's works) and the Skizzenausgabe (all the sketchbooks) were both moving forward. In 1985, Alan Tyson, Douglas Johnson and Robert Winter published The Beethoven Sketchbooks, a groundbreaking reference work that reconstructs the bewilderingly scattered corpus; and in 1996, Theodore Albrecht published three volumes of letters written to Beethoven. The long awaited establishment of these primary materials will give Beethoven scholars much to do in the 21st century.

Although the Beethoven myth has been dressed down in the academy, it remains alive as ever in mainstream commercial culture. A good deal of its vitality stems from the kitsch industry: the standard image of Beethoven's face and mane – the 'Lion King' of Western music – is reproduced ubiquitously, while the opening motive of the Fifth Symphony is still Western art music's most recognizable roar. An almost 200-year-old stream of minor

novels, novellas and films about Beethoven continues unabated, less accomplished descendants of the Romantic Künstlerroman; the most substantial of these is Romain Rolland's Jean-Christoph (1904–12). (There is even a subtradition detailing the dangerous effects of listening to Beethoven's music: Robert Griepenkerl's 1838 novel about a fatally boisterous Beethoven cult, Das Musikfest; oder, Die Beethovener, finds a distant echo in the ultra-violence of Anthony Burgess's 1962 novel A Clockwork Orange, strikingly filmed by Stanley Kubrick.) Above all, the more explicitly highbrow commodification of classical music, in music shops and concert programmes, continues to provide supply for demand. It is indeed the perennial appeal of Beethoven's music that perhaps tells most heavily for the persistence of the myth in popular culture.

(ii) Beethoven's influence on music and musical thought.

Beethoven's music seemed almost at once to establish a watershed in Western musical history, both as a culmination of the Viennese Classical style and as the beginning of a new musical age. He is treated time and time again as the most imposing feature in the landscape of 19th-century music, the mountainside from which the music of the rest of the century would echo. Wagner, breathing the intoxicating air of his own heights, clamorously proclaimed Beethoven's music as a transhistorical force leading to the Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk. Even nowadays, in the lapidary invocation of ‘the three Bs’, Beethoven is popularly imagined as rising above the historical terrain of Western music, linking Bach to Brahms.

The sheer drama and scope of Beethoven's most ambitious works fostered an overriding perception that his music coheres organically even to the point of inevitability. Beethoven's art registered as a sublime force of nature: here was a music that fully embodied the recently propounded shift in aesthetics from mimetic imitation of the products of nature to expressive emulation of her processes. The overmastering coherence felt in Beethoven's music became an imposing measure of the greatness of musical artworks. Not only individual works but whole genres in his output came to assume a wholeness and totality, as well as a sense of teleology: the symphonies, the string quartets and the piano sonatas are all treated as coherent narratives of creative development. Playing these ‘cycles’ in their entirety continues to be a standard test for ambitious performers.

Mainstream symphonic composers above all chafed under the magnitude of Beethoven's accomplishment; as Schubert put it, ‘who would be able to do anything after Beethoven?’. Few escaped this stifling anxiety, and for some, like Brahms, it was practically overwhelming. Musical reactions to Beethoven range from the obvious to the subtle, and are both epigonal and agonistic. The Ninth Symphony by itself may be said to have fathered, for better or for worse, any number of later works: its opening alone furnished Bruckner with a problem he tackled anew in each of his symphonies. There are isolated cases of consuming interest: the teenage Mendelssohn's precocious modelling of several of Beethoven's late string quartets – the enigmatic sounds of the late style incorporated into the melodramatic emotional life of adolescence; or Schubert's modelling, in his Piano Sonata d959, of the proportions and textures, but not the themes or motifs, of the rondo finale of op.31 no.1. We have Schumann's quasi-philosophical reaction to Beethoven, in his Fantasy for piano, where he muses on a wistful theme from An die ferne Geliebte, and Berlioz's parodistic reaction in his anti-heroic symphony Harold en Italie. There is Brahms's earnest, historically burdened reaction: the opening of the First Symphony actually sounds as if it were dragging some great weight. The symphonic art of Dvořák is impossible to imagine without the Beethoven of the Pastoral and Eighth Symphonies. Mahler, Richard Strauss and Sibelius carry Beethoven's most sweeping manner into the 20th century; and even the more distinctly modernist composers of the 20th century do not shy from his influence, particularly with the ascendance of the late style. Schoenberg emulates Beethoven's motivic art, Bartók's string quartets breathe the air of the late quartets, and Stravinsky was impressed by the perpetual modernity of the fractiously grandiose Grosse Fuge. Even the iconoclastic Boulez owes much to Beethoven's Hammerklavier Sonata in his own Second Piano Sonata.

Beethoven was to exercise a more subtle and no less pervasive influence within mainstream music criticism and theory. From the beginning, his music seemed to demand a more serious and attentive manner of listening. In several landmark reviews, E.T.A. Hoffmann lauded the deep coherence in Beethoven's music, noting that, as in the case of Shakespeare, the music's underlying unity could easily elude those critics attuned to conventional surfaces. Music critics could no longer hope to judge this music competently at a first hearing; according to A.B. Marx, whose editorship of the Berliner allgemeine musikalische Zeitung did so much to promote the music of Beethoven, critics needed to learn how to divine the Idea embodied in each of Beethoven's works. A hermeneutic imperative quickly gathered strength in the face of his music, one which has not abated. His works have been heard to be telling us something, as a kind of secular scripture in need of hermeneutic mediation. The 19th-century tendency to respond to much of his instrumental music with detailed extra-musical programmes has

found renewed life throughout the 20th century, in the work of Arnold Schering, Harry Goldschmidt, Owen Jander and others. In 1994, Albrecht Riethmüller and others published two volumes containing variously authored interpretations of each of Beethoven's major works; here the hermeneutic impulse unites with the equally familiar compulsion to deal with every note of Beethoven's music.

Another pervasive, if less overt, influence on Beethoven's music lives on in the more mainstream methods of musical analysis, for it is not far-fetched to claim that they were formed largely in response to his music. For example, the codification of sonata form in the work of A.B. Marx – one of the imposing legacies of 19th-century music theory – was essentially a codification of Beethoven's sonata forms, as manifest in his piano sonatas. And inasmuch as one can speak of a theory of form in the work of Tovey, it will perforce refer to Beethoven, the mainspring of Tovey's analytical and critical élan. Form was a kind of temporal logic for Tovey, a logic most manifest (and most worth tracing) in Beethoven.

Beethoven's music was both proving ground and breeding ground for two of the most pervasive methods of demonstrating coherence in tonal music, motivic analysis and Schenkerian part-writing analysis. For proponents of motivic analysis, Beethoven's musical art was heard to live at the level of the motif rather than the theme; motivic ubiquity and transformation were shown to betoken underlying unity and compelling thematic process. From Schoenberg's Grundgestalt to Rudolph Reti's prime cell, the method that works so transparently with the music of Beethoven was eagerly and automatically transferred to other music, not always without strain.

Easily the most practised and most respected method of tonal analysis in Anglo-American academia continues to be Heinrich Schenker's part-writing analysis. Here the theoretical emphasis on deep structure finds resonance with prevailing attitudes towards coherence in Beethoven's music; moreover, the compelling sense of forward motion, of line, often heard in Beethoven's music is well served by Schenker's concept of Urlinie, or primal line, a coherent linear entity discernible beneath the surface phenomena of local themes and motifs. Schenker published many analyses of Beethoven's works throughout his career, including monographs on the Ninth Symphony, the Fifth Symphony and several of the late piano sonatas; these analyses tended to coincide with major turning points in the development of his thought.

The music of the late period came into its own in the 20th century, and enjoyed a special role in shaping the methods and aims of musical analysis. With the continued viability of psychoanalytical theory and Schenkerian depth analysis, the late works took on a special aura, beckoning analysts to discern a deeper seated – latent – coherence underlying the often shockingly dissociated musical surfaces of these works. As such coherence is not so much visceral as abstract, not directly felt but indirectly intuited, much ingenuity has gone into establishing it.

Despite such analytical efforts, the surface dissociations of the late works have continued to disturb; ultimately these works resist assimilation into some saving unity. This very sense of resistance lies at the heart of several influential strands of 20th-century critical thought about Beethoven and about music. Much of Theodor Adorno's musical philosophy hinges on establishing Beethoven's music as a quasi-Hegelian representative of the subject in the modern age. For Adorno, the middle-period music represented a unique and unrepeatable reconciliation of subject and object, individual and world; in the late style the subject proceeds to absent itself, in a critique of that former synthesis that leaves behind a kind of desubjectivized musical materiality. More recently, the dissociations of the late style have proved stimulating to a burgeoning poststructuralist critical sensibility that seeks to challenge more strictly formalist analytical suppositions. In particular, the A minor quartet, op.132, has become a favourite site for these newer efforts. Here, the idea of musical unity seems to share the fate of the unified self: both are disarticulated, opened up to the variegated forces of the postmodern condition. Recent feminist music criticism also finds itself vitally concerned with Beethoven and subjectivity. It has been argued that the compelling autonomous self heard in the heroic style is the sound of an exclusionary masculinist ideal whose coronation as a priviledged norm deters appreciation of other musical sensibilities. Beethoven's music has thus been heard to embrace and encompass the fate of the subject in the West, and to define and circumscribe the fate of the Other – what other music could be said to have such reach, to fit such overarching narratives of modernity?

Some scholars, such as William Kinderman and Maynard Solomon, are intent on developing a more specifically historicized view of Beethoven's place in Western culture, particularly the nature of his relation to Enlightenment thought. Here the work of Schiller has begun to figure heavily as a source of many of Beethoven's artistic aims and accomplishments. Like Schiller, Beethoven's music is said to explore problems of reason and sensibility, aesthetics and ethics, nature and freedom. As always, there continues to be much speculation on meaning in Beethoven's music, and from many different quarters; one semiotic theory of music (Hatten, J1994) is predicated on the music of Beethoven. A common theme runs through the work of all these recent critics: all argue strongly

against the persistent notion of Beethoven's music as a timeless aesthetic force, agreeing instead that it performs specific cultural work. Just what that work is remains a source of fruitful and lively contention.

(iii) Political reception.

Although it has been argued that the reception of art is always political and ideological at some level, the history of Beethoven reception offers case after case of explicit political appropriation of his music and ideological monumentalization of his figure as a spiritual hero. Among the steady production of monuments erected to honour Beethoven throughout the 19th century, the most strikingly grandiose is the nude statue by Klinger (fig. 17), unveiled in Vienna in 1900. A more lasting and influential monument has been the continuing presence of Beethoven's music in Western political arenas, for such instances may well constitute the most overt and far-reaching effect of his music. Of course, Beethoven himself wrote occasional music for expressly political purposes: the 'Battle Symphony' and Der glorreiche Augenblick are only the best known of these ventures, both performed as part of the celebrations surrounding the Congress of Vienna in 1814. These pieces are routinely denigrated as hack-work, their politics all too obvious. Yet, Beethoven's symphonies — his most universally revered, public statements — have been readily and repeatedly appropriated for far more sweeping and insidious political ends.

The symphonies have consistently been heard to occupy a moral high ground. In particular, the Third, Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Symphonies came to represent the monumental and sublime as opposed to the 'merely' lyrical and beautiful, and consequently they were frequently conscripted in German denunciations of the music of France and Italy. In the 1820s, at a time when the Prussian nation sought to consolidate and maintain something like an aesthetic and civic character, Beethoven's symphonies formed an important bulwark in the burgeoning ideology of German spiritual nationhood. From then on, Beethoven and his music have never been far from the most momentous scenes of modern Germany's political history.

In 1870, German victory in the Franco-Prussian War coincided with the centenary of Beethoven's birth. The connection was seized upon by the organizers of numerous musical and political festivals, and by Wagner, whose 1870 monograph on Beethoven explicitly equated the sublimity of Beethoven's art with that of the German spirit, as a triumph of the ideal inner world over the French world of appearances. Bismarck himself was said to revere Beethoven; legend has it that he ordered a performance of the Fifth Symphony just before mobilizing his army.

The merger of Beethoven and German politics continued apace in the 20th century. During World War I, Beethoven's music was played relentlessly in German concert halls, and there are many accounts of soldiers invoking Beethoven as an inspirational model of German heroism. Later, the Third Reich aggressively exploited the power of his music in its propaganda and even turned to Beethoven during its demise: Hitler's death was announced on German radio to the strains of the Funeral March from the 'Eroica' Symphony. Ironically, the opening motif of the Fifth Symphony, due to its rhythmic similarity to the Morse Code letter V, became associated with Allied victory, and Beethoven's music in general was immensely popular in wartime Britain. Almost half a century later, the Ninth Symphony was heard at a concert commemorating the fall of the Berlin Wall. Leonard Bernstein conducted, famously substituting the word 'Freiheit' for 'Freude' in the choral finale.

Thus Beethoven's music has served throughout the last two centuries as a kind of potent and free floating moral force that can be harnessed for any number of political enterprises, from racial purity to human rights, fascistic subjugation to world brotherhood, without suffering the stigma of the collaborator. His music has survived these multifarious appropriations, just as Beethoven's status as a cultural hero has survived concerted attempts to dismantle the Beethoven myth. One cannot but accord to this music and this composer an unexampled cultural and historical force in the modern West. His music has fought wars and celebrated victories, consoled and scorned, empowered and overmastered. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to imagine a time when Beethoven's music will not continue to exercise its paradoxically confounding and foundational force. Perhaps when that happens, the Western world will truly have passed into another age.